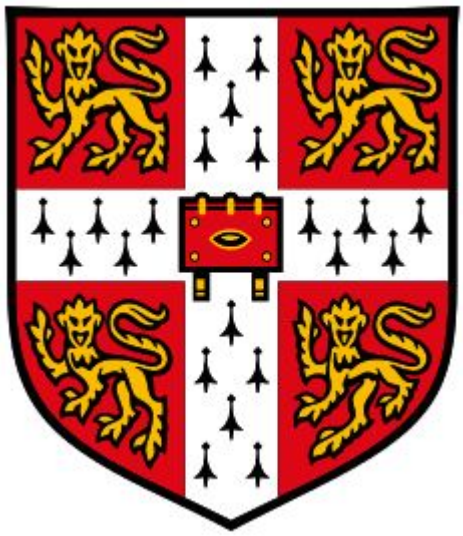
Nearer to the People:
The Interaction Between Decentralisation and the Political Economy in Uganda



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Preface

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

Christine van Hooft

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The interaction between decentralisation and the political economy in Uganda

Since the introduction of decentralisation in Uganda in the late 1980s, the number of districts has nearly quadrupled, in a process known as district proliferation. Accordingly, districts have become highly dependent on the central government for funding. This dependence renders sub-national governments unable to respond to local development priorities, weakening the core goals of decentralisation.

A majority of the literature relating to decentralisation in Uganda views decentralisation through a prism of broader economic and governance reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, authors downplay the importance of the political economy context in which decentralisation has been implemented for determining its outcomes and results. Regarding the specific issue of district proliferation in Uganda, analysis in the existing literature is focused on the experiences and incentives of elite actors. Authors have engaged less with non-elite and rural perspectives: the viewpoints of those at the 'grassroot'.

This thesis analyses the drivers of district proliferation in Uganda, and includes the viewpoints of those at the grassroot in addition to urban elites. The research captures the incentives driving multiple actors across a number of binaries: rural and urban, elected and employed, elites and non-elites. It is argued that the rapid proliferation of districts in Uganda arises from the rational pursuit of self-interest by multiple actors within the political economy. Accordingly, the research moves beyond the dominant explanation of district proliferation: as a vector for elites to generate patronage networks and claim access to the resources of the state. Instead, the research positions district proliferation in the context of livelihood strategies at the level of the grassroot and within the bureaucracy, and as a political survival strategy for those in elected roles. The continued proliferation of new districts in Uganda is shown to be an outcome of the interaction between decentralisation and the political economy. As such, district proliferation shows no sign of abating.

To
Lynne, Stan, Kate and Paul.

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This thesis has been supported by very, very many people, spread across three continents. I am immensely grateful to everyone mentioned here, as well as those whose support reaches beyond what could be captured on this page.

My PhD supervisor, Dr Shailaja Fennell, has been a source of inspiration and encouragement throughout my PhD (and my MPhil beforehand). A conversation with Dr Fennell turns my jumbles of ideas and thoughts and concepts into concrete arguments and frameworks; into a forward path. The 'Fennellians', in our great number and diversity, are testament to Dr Fennell's commitment to collaboration and inclusion. The CDS is greatly enriched by her dedication to supervision, leadership, teaching and research.

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encouragement are each very much appreciated. The ARB has been a wonderful environment in which to work, with a powerful feeling of collaboration and openness between faculty and students, and I look forward to working together in the future.

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Friends in the UK, Uganda and Australia have provided a great deal of support to me while I completed this thesis. In the UK: Alice and Tom; Anna G and David; Cassie, Evros, Jordan and Anton of 8CS; Alex, Ben and Jamie; Amy B, Anna E and Rebecca H; Kate C; Jane, Doreen and Sophie; Kelsey and Ben; Taylor, Jenni and Hannah; all of the Voices; and (very very very much) CJ and Nungari. In Uganda, three times now: Margey, Mari, Bryony, Vicky and Jen. In Australia: Annette and Leda; Erin; Alex, Suyin and Netta; the Jakarta family; Rosie; Bec L; Gabs and Tom; Anh, Dionne and Pete; Rebecca F; Laura; the African Studies Research Group at Melbourne Uni; and the mighty Coburg Lions. I owe you all about a million coffees.

Finally, to Mum and Dad: thank you for ensuring that both education and travel have always been a priority in my life, so that undertaking a PhD in another country, based on a third country, seemed like an entirely reasonable thing to do. Thank you for always visiting me in all the places I have lived (and for not complaining about how far away most of them have been from Melbourne). And special thanks to my sister Kate for publishing your debut novel to widespread and enthusiastic acclaim, in literally the month before I submitted my PhD. Well played.

Acknowledgement of country

The final drafts of this thesis were completed on lands that are held in the ongoing custodianship of the Wurundjeri people, of the Kulin nation. I respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri Elders and communities of the past, present and future.

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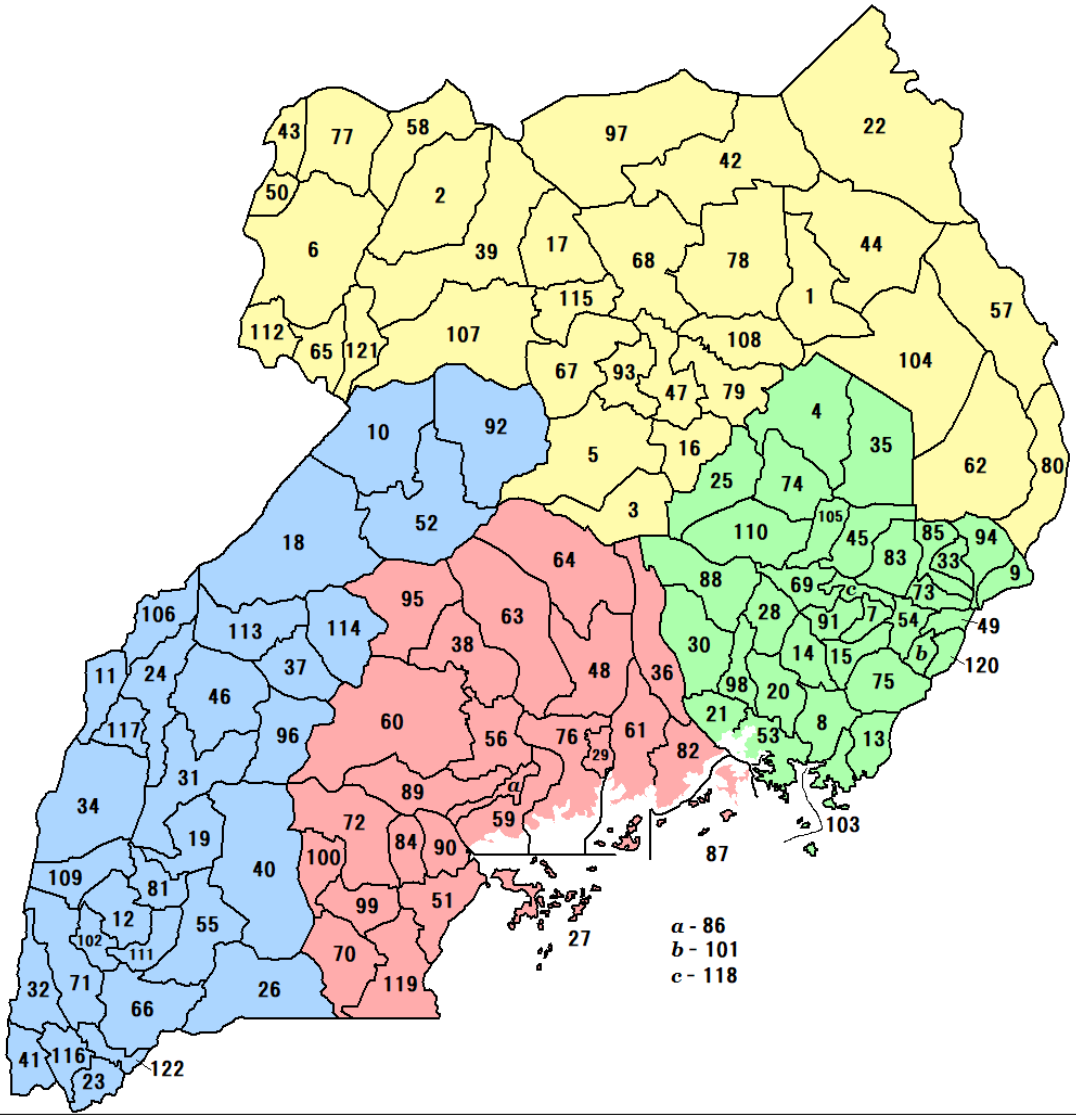
Acronyms and Glossary

Acronym	Name in full
ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
BPED	Budget Planning and Execution Department, MoFPED
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
DHO	District Health Officer
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change (political party)
FINMAP	Financial Management and Accountability Program
Gombolola	The Luganda term for the sub-county level
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIPC Initiative	Highly-Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
ISSD	Infrastructure and Social Services Department, MoFPED
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Kabaka	The king of the Baganda people
LC	Local Council
LGBFP	Local Government Budget Framework Paper
LGFC	Local Government Finance Commission
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sport
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NBFP	National Budget Framework Paper
NPM	New Public Management
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PAD	Public Administration Department, MoFPED
PAF	Poverty Action Fund
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PFM	Public Financial Management
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
PRSP	Poverty-Reduction Strategy Paper
RC	Resistance Council
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SCCDO	Sub-County Community Development Officer
SCEO	Sub-County Education Officer
SCHO	Sub-County Health Officer

ULGA	Uganda Local Government Association
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
UNRA	Uganda National Roads Authority
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPF	Uganda Police Force
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
Vote	The budget line for a specific sector or level of government; the budget lines for the healthcare budget is the Health Vote

Maps of Uganda and of studied districts

Map 1. Map of Uganda with districts (at 30 June 2017)[1] [2]



Blue – western districts
Red – central districts
Green – eastern districts
Yellow – northern districts

[1] An additional thirteen districts have been announced to commence on 1 July 2017 (six districts) and 1 July 2018 (seven districts). A complete list of districts with their location, parent district and year of commencement is given at Appendix A.
[2] Source: Open source media (Synarion62)

Key

1	Abim	42	Kitgum	83	Bukedea
2	Adjumani	43	Koboko	84	Bukomansimbi
3	Amolatar	44	Kotido	85	Bulambuli
4	Amuria	45	Kumi	86	Butambala
5	Apac	46	Kyenjojo	87	Buvuma
6	Arua	47	Lira	88	Buyende
7	Budaka	48	Luweero	89	Gomba
8	Bugiri	49	Bududa	90	Kalungu
9	Bukwa	50	Maracha	91	Kibuku
10	Buliisa	51	Masaka	92	Kiryandongo
11	Bundibugyo	52	Masindi	93	Kole
12	Bushenyi	53	Mayuge	94	Kween
13	Busia	54	Mbale	95	Kyankwanzi
14	Numutumba	55	Mbarara	96	Kyegegwa
15	Butaleja	56	Mityana	97	Lamwo
16	Dokolo	57	Moroto	98	Luuka
17	Gulu	58	Moyo	99	Lwengo
18	Hoima	59	Mpigi	100	Lyantonde
19	Ibanda	60	Mubende	101	Manafwa
20	Iganga	61	Mukono	102	Mitooma
21	Jinja	62	Nakapiritpirit	103	Namayingo
22	Kaabong	63	Nakaseke	104	Napak
23	Kabale	64	Nakasolonga	105	Ngora
24	Kabarole	65	Nebbi	106	Ntoroko
25	Kaberamaido	66	Ntungamo	107	Nwoya
26	Isingiro	67	Oyam	108	Otuke
27	Kalangala	68	Pader	109	Rubirizi
28	Kaliro	69	Pallisa	110	Serere
29	Kampala	70	Rakai	111	Sheema
30	Kamuli	71	Rukungiri	112	Zombo
31	Kamwenge	72	Sembabule	113	Kagadi
32	Kanungu	73	Sironko	114	Kakumiro
33	Kapchorwa	74	Soroti	115	Omoro
34	Kasese	75	Tororo	116	Rubanda
35	Katakwi	76	Wakiso	117	Bunyangabu
36	Kayunga	77	Yumbe	118	Butebo
37	Kibaale	78	Agago	119	Kyotera
38	Kiboga	79	Alebtong	120	Namisindwa
39	Amuru	80	Amudat	121	Pakwach
40	Kiruhura	81	Buhweju	122	Rukiga
41	Kisoro	82	Buikwe		

Map 2. Map of Uganda's districts, with the three studied districts illustrated

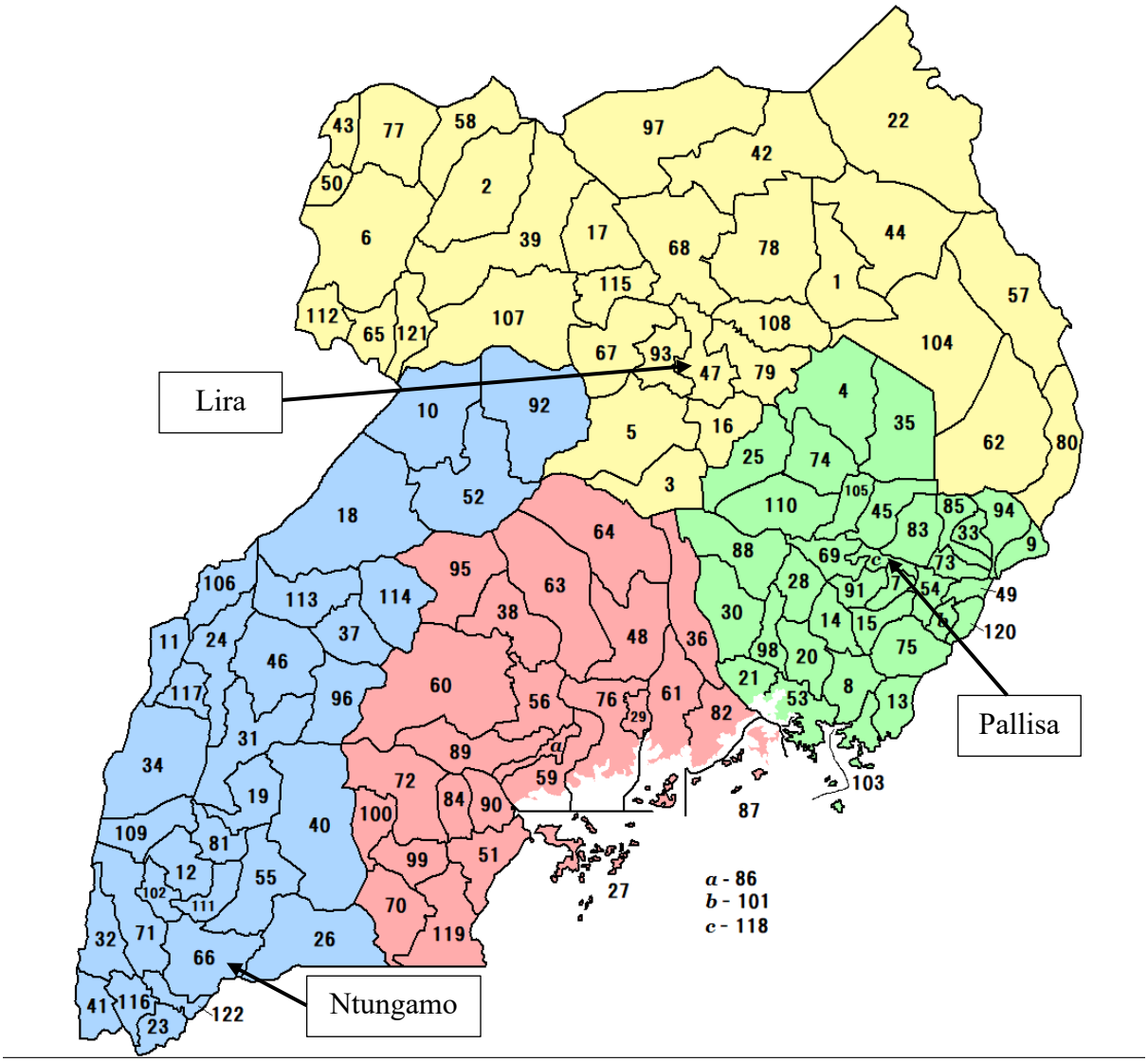


Image 1: Pallisa Local Government Headquarters and Council Chambers

Map 3. Map of Pallisa District with studied villages

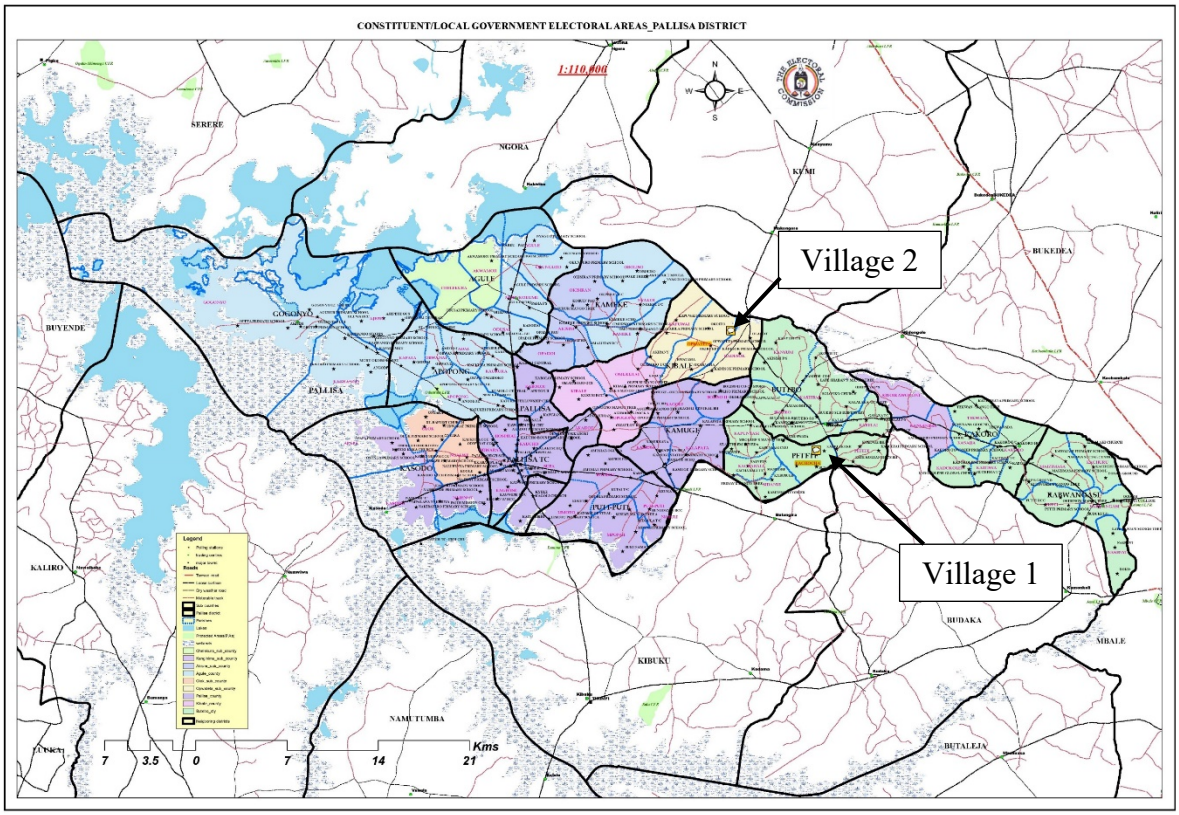


Image 2: Lira Local Government Headquarters and Council Chambers

Map 4. Map of Lira District with studied villages

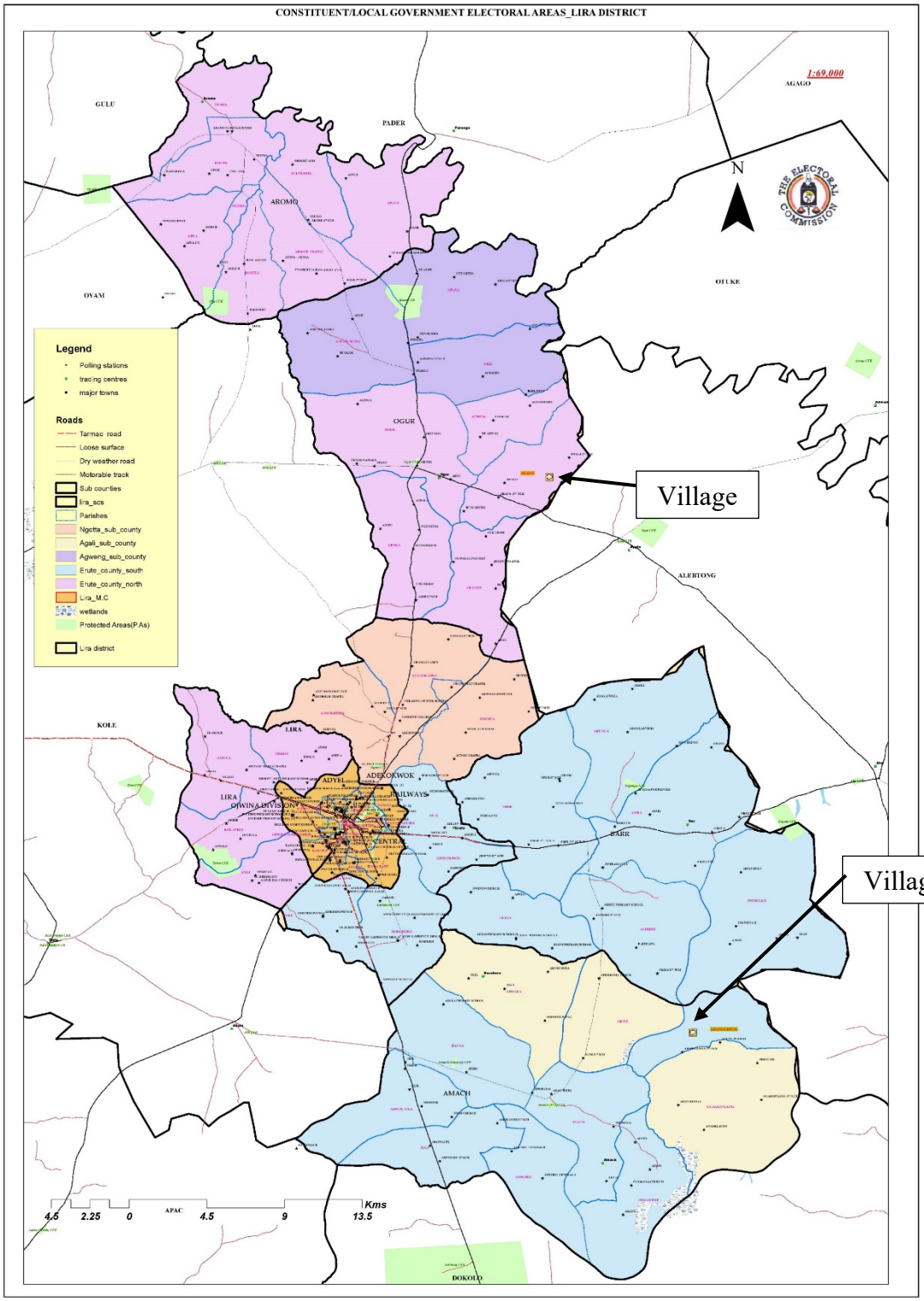
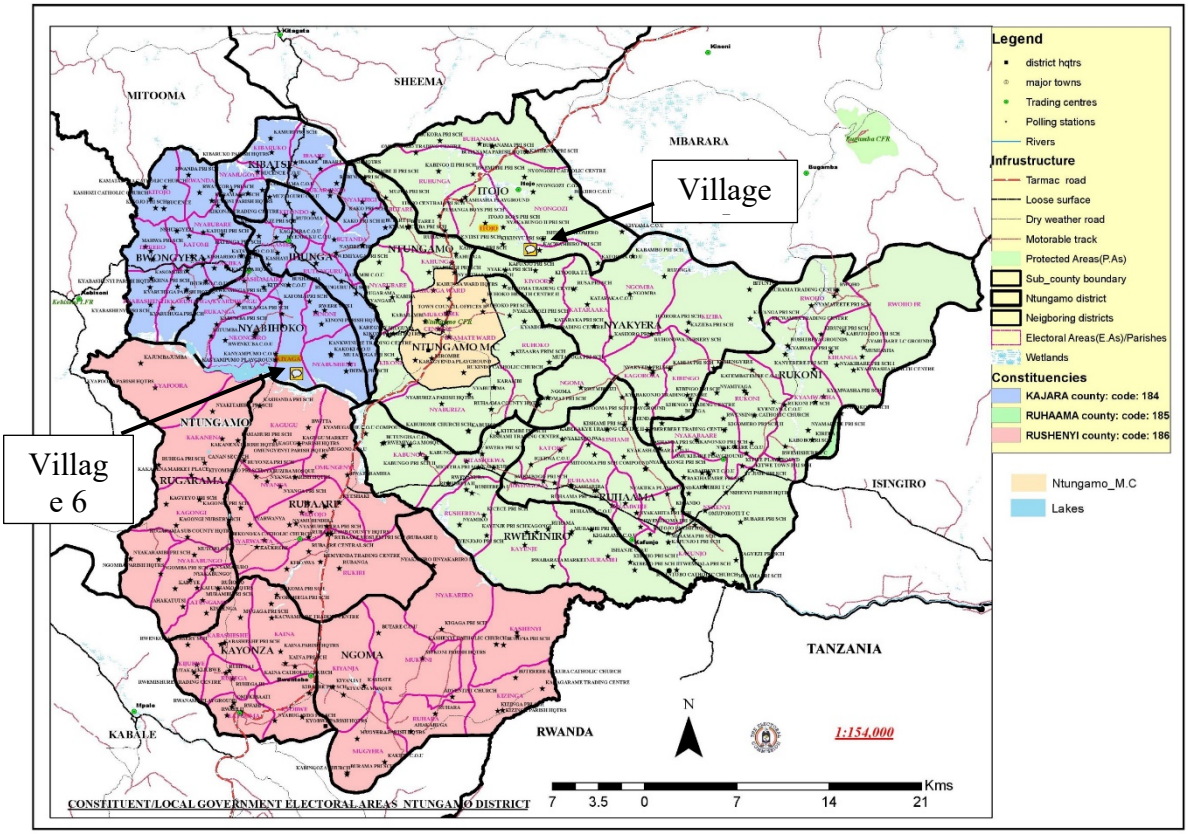


Image 3: Ntungamo Local Government Headquarters and Council Chambers

Map 5. Map of Ntungamo District with studied villages



Chapter One:

Situating district proliferation within the Ugandan political economy

> Both the road and the 'regional centre' would thus make possible a strong government or 'development' presence in the area… Both these innovations are considered essential prerequisites to any sort of 'development' in the mountain region.
>
> *- Ferguson, 'The Anti-Politics Machine'*[3]

An important challenge for governments in achieving improved development is how to transfer resources from the capital city to populations living in rural areas. In many countries, decentralised governance has been implemented to achieve progress against this goal. Decentralisation requires that sub-national governments be established and be allocated a range of responsibilities. Governments implement decentralisation for a range of reasons, and may have implicit as well as explicit goals for its implementation. In Uganda, the Government's decentralisation goals have been complex, and have included political as well as development objectives.

This chapter introduces the central concepts and themes of this research, and provides relevant background regarding the Ugandan national context. The research idea for this thesis examines the implications of decentralisation in Uganda, and asks how decentralisation has interacted with the existing political economy.[4] This research explores how these two elements affect one another. This two-directional research question contributes to a more complex understanding of the ways in which decentralisation affects the context in which it is implemented, and is in turn affected by that context. By utilising a political-economy approach, the research undertaken for this thesis hopes to contribute to a stronger understanding of district proliferation in Uganda. Accordingly, the research question addressed by this thesis is:

How does the political economy interact with decentralisation in Uganda?

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[3] Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine*. Page 78.

[4] Following Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, '*Aiding Economic Growth in Africa: The Political Economy of Roads Reform in Uganda'*, 'political economy' is understood as the institutional context of decentralisation policy, the interacting interests of stakeholders, and political processes of economic change.

Rather than consider that decentralisation is a technical or administrative reform, this thesis positions decentralisation within a specific context, and analyses how the local context drives the outcomes of this policy mechanism. In turn, by analysing the effect of the political economy on decentralisation, this thesis assesses the extent and ways in which the outcomes of decentralisation are distorted or shifted from their origins, to deliver unpredictable or even undesirable outcomes.

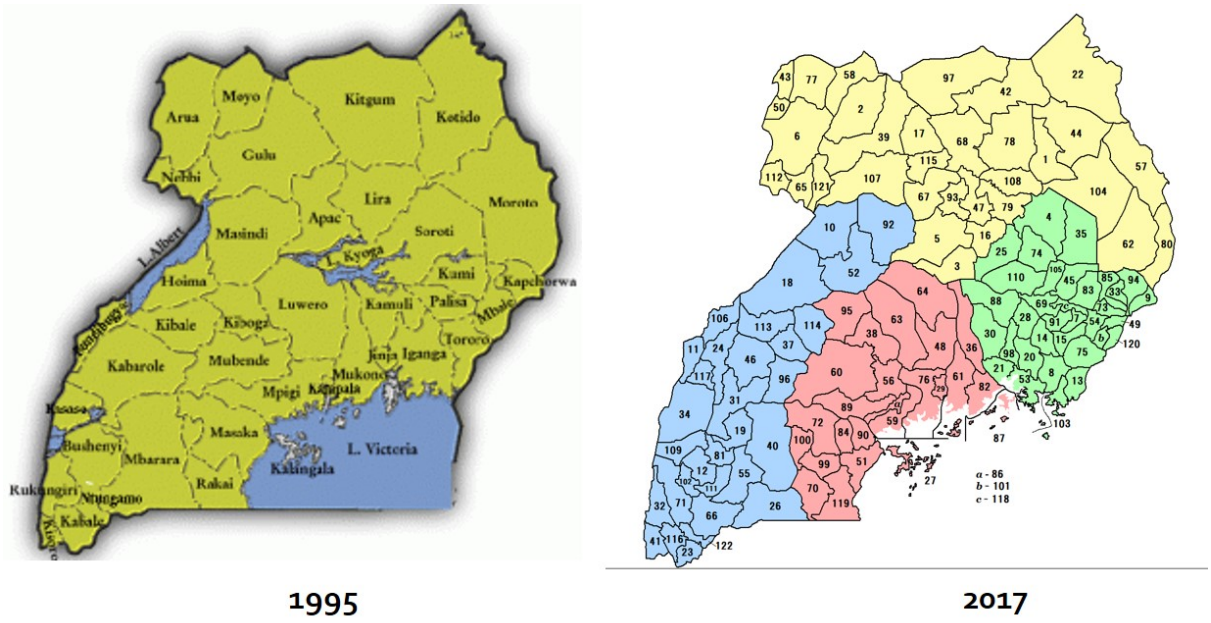
The impact of decentralisation on the local context, and vice-versa, has contributed to an unusual phenomenon that has been observed in Uganda: the rapid creation of a large number of new districts[5] and sub-counties.[6] Map 6 below illustrates the growth in the number of districts since 1995. The existence of this phenomenon, referred to in Uganda as 'district proliferation',[7] is widely acknowledged, and the fiscal burden this phenomenon has created has been openly debated and discussed. Nonetheless, the causes and factors that drive administrative-unit proliferation have been less common. In particular, the question of why district and sub-county proliferation continues to occur,[8] even after it has been strongly critiqued and its fiscal burdens acknowledged, presents a puzzle. This thesis seeks to address this puzzle, by examining the interaction between decentralisation and the Ugandan political economy.

[5] Districts are the highest level of sub-national government in the Ugandan decentralised structure (they are the first level of government below the national government). Districts are comprised of between one and five counties, which are themselves comprised of sub-counties. Sub-counties are comprised of parishes, within which a number of villages is defined.

[6] This thesis focuses on the creation of districts and sub-counties, though it is noted that the quantity of their equivalent urban structures (town councils and municipalities) has also expanded rapidly over the same period of time. Indeed, the creation of an additional district usually results in the creation of a new town council in turn, to serve as the headquarters of the newly-created district. In most districts in Uganda, the name of the district and the name of the Town Council that is the capital of that district are the same (so the capital of Pallisa is Pallisa Town, and of Ntungamo is Ntungamo Town, etc). Throughout this thesis, place names should be understood to be the district, rather than the town, unless the 'Town' suffix is added.

[7] 'District proliferation' is defined by Grossman and Lewis (Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217. Page 198) as "A political process resulting in a large number of local governments splitting into two or more units over a relatively short period".

[8] A new administrative unit is created through a decision of the parliament or council above that level. For example, a new district is created through a majority decision of the national Parliament, and a new sub-county is created by a majority-passed motion of a district council. According to the Constitution of Uganda, s.179(4), the conditions under which a new administrative unit can be created are as follows: "Any measure for the alteration of the boundaries of or the creation of districts or administrative units shall be based on the necessity for effective administration and the need to bring services closer to the people, and it may take into account the means of communication, geographical features, density of population, economic viability and the wishes of the people concerned." There is no requirement to consider the financial viability of any newly-created administrative unit.



Map 6: Comparing maps of Ugandan districts, 1995 vs 2017

The purpose of this research is to contribute to understandings of the rapid creation of new districts in Uganda, including an expanded notion of its causes and driving factors. The research undertaken for this thesis has explicitly included the perspective of citizens at the village level, and so contributes the bottom-up perspective of villagers. The analysis of district proliferation that arises from this research is important in light of the argument that Ugandan decentralisation is a model for other countries, and has been successful at transferring resources to the grassroot.[9] This thesis argues that the proliferation of new districts results from demand from the grassroot[10] for development to be realised, where decentralisation has not yet succeeded in achieving the delivery of improved services and participatory governance.

[9] Villadsen and Lubanga, *Democratic Decentralisation in Uganda: A New Approach to Local Governance*.

[10] The term 'grassroot' is used throughout this thesis in the manner it is used in the Ugandan context, which is to signify the village level of the social and economic structure. This is distinct from its more common international usage, which indicates community-based organisations that operate at the village level. In Uganda, this term is used to refer to the village itself, or to rural villages in general, or to people who live in such a village – rather than to organisations that operate at the village level. Examples of this usage can be found in Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*; Ayeko-Kümmeth, 'Districts Creation and Its Impact on Local Government in Uganda'; Tukamushaba, 'Human Resource Capacity Building and Service Delivery in Kanungu District, Uganda'.

In conducting this research, different research approaches have been utilised compared to the majority of authors[11] in this field, whose research focuses predominantly on the standpoint of elite actors in the Ugandan context.[12] Instead, the author has utilised survey methodology to include the viewpoints, goals and opinions of those living at the village level. Assessing this phenomenon from multiple perspectives – including those of the people at the grassroot itself – allows for an exploration of the multiple motivations of actors that coincide and contribute to the creation of additional districts and sub-counties. The creation of sub-national units facilitates the survival, livelihood and access strategies of a broad range of actors in the political economy context. This thesis argues that it is the politicisation and manipulation of the decentralisation process that has generated the perception that decentralisation can be a successful instrument for transferring resources to the village level. However, the fiscal burden caused by the rapid proliferation of sub-national units may limit the sustainability of this mechanism.

Chapter One positions the research in a broader context and background, and offers some contextualisation and explanations of key terminology. Firstly, important concepts relating to decentralisation will be framed in the specific Ugandan context. The research purpose and motivation will be described, as well as the contribution of the research. It will be argued that the research methods used in this thesis, that are inclusive of the perspectives of actors at the grassroot level, moves the analysis beyond the dominant framing of decentralisation in the existing literature. Rather than focusing on decentralisation as an elite-dominated process, this research analyses the motivations of actors across the political-economy spectrum.

[11] Such as Elliott Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda', *Crisis States Working Papers Series* 2 (2008b); and Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000567.
[12] As argued in Falleti, 'A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective'.

1.1 How decentralisation is implemented in the Ugandan context

This section begins by describing the way in which decentralisation has been implemented in Uganda, including the fiscal, administrative and political elements of decentralisation in this specific context. From there, this section describes theoretical concepts regarding decentralisation in a generalised contextual environment. Finally, descriptions are offered of the key concepts that underpin decentralisation theory, and how these are conceptualised and implemented in the Ugandan context.

Decentralisation: Meaning, types and use in the Ugandan context

The idea of creating multiple tiers of government, and assigning rights and responsibilities to these tiers, is at the core of decentralisation. The term 'decentralisation' is used throughout the literature in slightly varying ways, and on occasion is blurred with other terminology.[13] In this thesis, 'decentralisation' is used to mean the transfer of responsibilities for the delivery of key projects and policies from the central government to sub-national governments.[14] In the Ugandan context, decentralisation has been implemented in three ways. These are: administrative decentralisation, the creation of sub-national public administrations or bureaucracies, such as at the district level; political decentralisation, the creation of sub-national elected bodies, such as councils; and fiscal decentralisation, the assigning of tax-collection and revenue-raising rights to sub-national units.[15] Each of these will now be discussed in turn, in reference to the established practices in the Ugandan context.

[13] For example, 'devolution' is sometimes used interchangeably with decentralisation. The author takes devolution to mean a slightly different practice from decentralisation. Devolution indicates the transfer of central government responsibilities to a sub-national administration, without the assumption that the sub-national administration undertakes its own planning processes for those responsibilities. The sub-national administration simply implements the policies and programs decided upon at the national level. 'Deconcentration' is also used interchangeably with decentralisation, but refers specifically to the practice of changing the physical location of a government office to a location other than a capital city. The office in question remains an agency of the national government; it is not a part of any sub-national government.
[14] For example, responsibility for the delivery of primary schools is transferred to sub-national units.
[15] Cabral, 'Decentralisation in Africa'.

Political decentralisation in Uganda

In the Ugandan structure, five levels of political decentralisation and two levels of administrative and fiscal decentralisation have been implemented.[16] Each corresponds to an administrative unit, as illustrated below.

Administrative Unit	**Council**	**Public service present?**
District	LC5	Yes
County	LC4	No
Sub-county[17]	LC3	Yes
Parish	LC2	No
Village	LC1	No

1.1 Levels and types of decentralised political structures in Uganda

Political decentralisation has been achieved via the creation of five levels of councils, called Local Councils (LCs), that operate below the level of the central government. These are numbered in sequence, from LC1 at the level of the village, to LC5 at the level of the district. LC1 councillors are elected by universal adult suffrage at the level of the village. Councillors from LC2 to LC5 are comprised of councillors from the level below (so an LC2 council is comprised of councillors from the LC1 councils of each village within the parish, elected by citizens of the parish).[18] LC5[19] councils are likewise comprised of representatives from the sub-county (LC3) councils that comprise that district. Councils at each level contain a range of sub-committees[20] tasked with addressing particular issues, or the management of specific sectors. The Council is chaired by the LC5 Council Chair, supported by the LC5 Speaker (corresponding Chair and Speaker roles are also present in the LC3 Councils).[21]

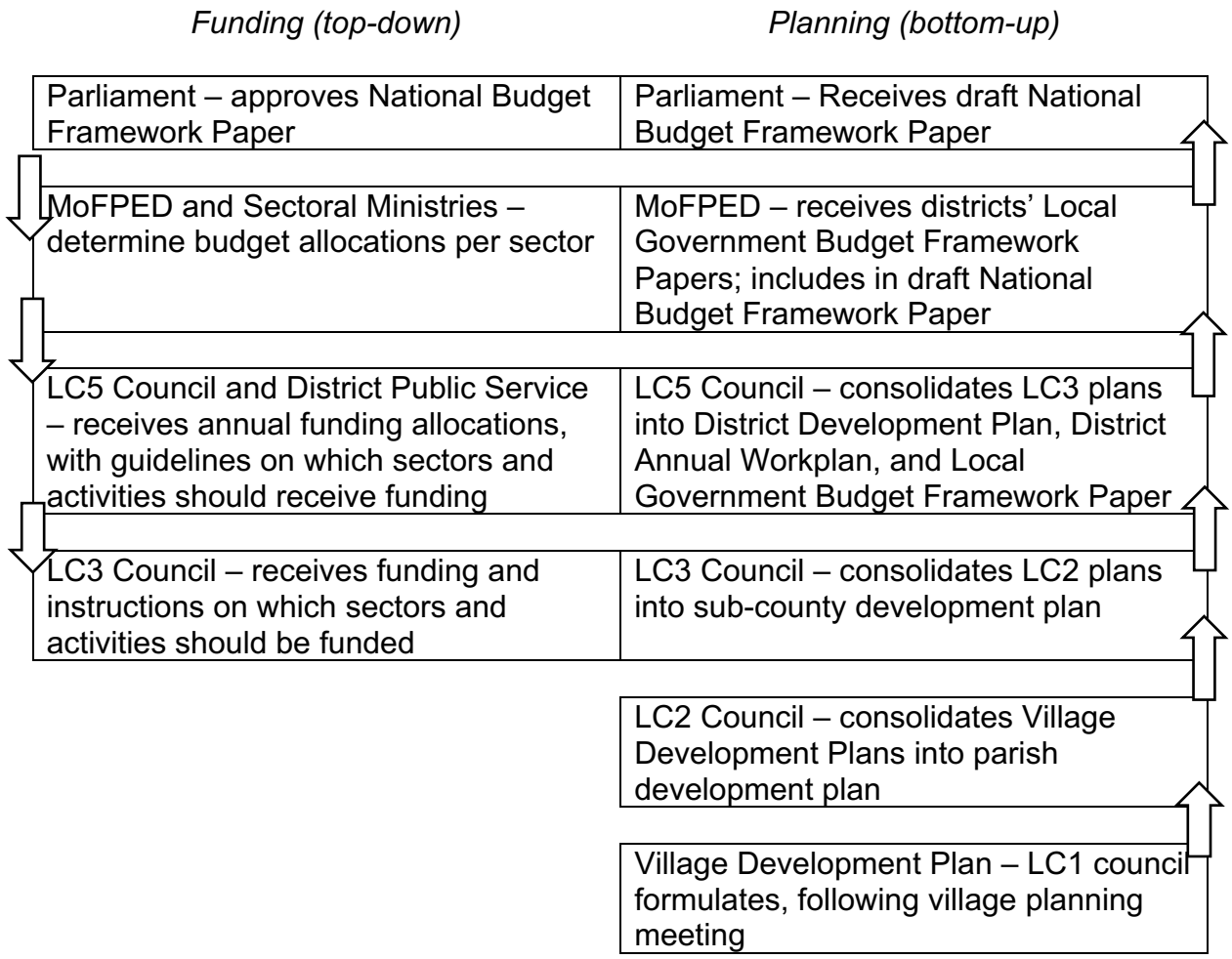
[16] Ndegwa, 'Decentralization in Africa'.
[17] Also referred to as *Gombolola.*
[18] Devas and Grant, 'Local Government Decision-making—Citizen Participation and Local Accountability: Some Evidence from Kenya and Uganda'.
[19] LC4 councils do not operate in practice.
[20] Examples include the Parish Development Committee, and the District Executive Committee.
[21] Ndegwa, 'Decentralization in Africa'.

Among other roles, councils are responsible for debating and approving the district and sub-county's annual budgets and workplans. This decision-making authority over the allocation of resources gives local councils power, and means that those who hold council positions have attained high status within the community. Despite this, councillors are not paid salaries. Councillors are entitled to allowance to meet the cost of performing council duties, such as sitting allowances to attend council meetings, and vehicles and office spaces are provided.[22] In this sense, election to the role of Councillor entitles an individual to claim resources from the state.

Administrative decentralisation in Uganda

Administrative decentralisation is implemented via the creation of public service organisations at the district and the sub-county levels, with responsibility for undertaking the full project cycle regarding the provision of public services. The responsibilities of district and sub-county governments, as established in the *Local Government Act 1997 Cap. 243*, include annual budgeting and planning, contracting and procurement, financial management, and project management. These levels of bureaucracy are also able to charge taxes and levies, and so raise revenue locally.[23] Sub-national governments are also required to consult the citizens of their regions on their development priorities, in a system known as bottom-up planning. As will be analysed in more detail in sections 4.1 and 6.2, bottom-up planning is to begin at the village level, with citizens gathering for regular planning meetings chaired by the LC1 Council. These meetings produce a village development plan, which is passed to the LC2 council, and then upwards through the LC3 and LC5, so that District Development Plans are inclusive of village-level development priorities.[24] However, funding processes are largely top-down, with funding originating from the central government, the implications of which will be discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2. Diagram 1.2 below illustrates the top-down funding system and bottom-up planning system in place in Uganda.

[22] Grossman and Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation'.
[23] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.



1.2 The top-down financing system and bottom-up planning system in Uganda

The responsibilities of the central government still include provision of public goods that are not delivered at the sub-national level, such as national defence, and the construction of major roads (roads that pass through more than one district). The central government also undertakes monitoring and supervision of the work that is implemented by sub-national governments, to encourage compliance and quality standards to be met.[25]

[25] Ahmad and Brosio, *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?*

The staffing structure[26] of the public service at the sub-national level is extensive, being comprised of the Chief Administration Officer (CAO), a Deputy CAO, District Planner, and sectoral teams for Education, Health, Water, Community Development, and other services sectors. A Chief Financial Officer, and District Human Resources Officer are also engaged. Technical officers such as an engineer may also be employed directly at the village level. These senior roles are supported by more junior-level staff. This structure is replicated at the sub-county, though with fewer supporting staff. For all officers in the district public service, there is a minimum education level of Senior Four,[27] the fourth year of high school. There is no minimum education requirement councillors at any level. Finally, each district is assigned three representatives from the central government, namely the Resident District Commissioner (RDC); a police officer; and a District Internal Security Officer (DISO).

Fiscal decentralisation in Uganda

Fiscal decentralisation is a more complex story, and is one that has shifted over time. With the introduction of decentralisation in Uganda in the contemporary era,[28] from 1986 onwards, districts were granted the right to charge local levies and taxes. However, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, in many districts the tax base is low. Districts' locally-raised revenue comprises only a small part of incoming funding, and districts remain heavily dependent on the central government for financing their budgets. For sub-counties, likewise, the local tax base is low, and sub-counties' budgets are largely comprised of transfers from districts and from the central government. Furthermore, the high level of conditionality[29] built into the system of transfers from the central government restricts the ability of sub-national governments

[26] The staff of district and sub-county administrations are recruited, paid and employed by the District Service Committee in each district. Staff are therefore employed specifically for their own district, and cannot for example be promoted into a more senior role in a different district. The exception to this is the senior public servant at the district, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is an employee of the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) at the national level, and is employed via a fixed-term contract. CAOs may be transferred to a different district by MoPS. Officers in the public service receive regular salary payments and pensions, and are entitled to use office space and equipment. Senior officials are also entitled to use a vehicle with a driver and fuel.
[27] Manyak and Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda'.
[28] Noting that earlier forms of decentralisation had been established during the colonial era
[29] Under which grants are issued for a particular purpose, as specified by agencies in the central government. For example, grants may be allocated for the provision of primary schools. The funding contained in this grant can only under very limited circumstances be allocated to an expenditure item other than the provision of primary schools.

to exercise discretionary authority over funding. This presents a barrier to the ability of sub-national governments to be responsive to the development needs and priorities of the community. While the official position in Uganda is that fiscal decentralisation has been implemented, the continuing dependence of sub-national units on the central government for the overwhelming majority of their budgets draws this claim into question.

The rationales and assumptions underpinning decentralisation

Implementing decentralisation[30] is far from a costless exercise, with government budgets absorbing the cost of creating sub-national units, paying salaries for new administrators and elected officials, constructing new offices and providing facilities and vehicles. In resource-constrained developing countries, where the opportunity cost of this expenditure is substantial in terms of direct financing of public services, it is necessary for central governments to present clear statements of the benefits that will accrue from the implementation of decentralisation. Section 2.1 details in historical perspective the way these rationales have shifted over time, in line with changing trends in international development policy and economic theory. In the most recent era, decentralisation is oriented around the achievement of two principal rationales.[31] They will be briefly outlined here, and will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.1.

Decentralisation and improvements in service delivery

The first argument made in favour of decentralisation in the contemporary era is that decentralisation brings the site of decision-making over public services nearer to the population that will be the end-users of these services. Compared to the central government, which may be geographically remote, the nearness of a sub-national government is said to mean that government obtains a greater level of cognisance of local development priorities. According to this rationale, public services are more

[30] From here on, the term 'decentralisation' is used to refer to all three of fiscal, administrative and political decentralisation.
[31] Bardhan, 'Decentralization of Governance and Development'.

closely targeted to their areas of greatest need, meaning that allocative efficiency of budgetary expenditure improves.[32]

Decentralisation and improvements in participatory governance

Secondly, the proximity of sub-national governments to the community is thought to improve the accountability of government to the population. This operates in two ways. Firstly, the nearness of sub-national governments to the population means that members of the community are thought to be more able to complain to government about any poor standards of delivery of services. Secondly, the greater proximity of local governments to the population is thought to mean that local governments are able to be more consultative of local communities when formulating workplans and budgets. Local governments are able to develop consultative and participatory programs of work, that are inclusive of members of the community.[33] The outcome of this practice is that the day-to-day operations are thought to be more democratic and participatory than when decisions are made by central governments in a distant location, far from where local citizens can practically reach.

The greater accessibility of local governments to the population, finally, indicates that local governments can in theory be held to account more effectively than a remote central government. Because local representatives can be observed more easily than central government representatives, they can be held to account more effectively via local elections.[34]

Decentralisation and Members of National Parliament

It should be noted, however, that both the supply-side and demand-side arguments in favour of decentralisation that are described here disregard one important relationship: that of the community to their local MP. These theories indicate that a desirable mechanism for improving the supply of and demand for good

[32] Craig and Porter, 'The Third Way and the Third World: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategies in the Rise of "Inclusive" Liberalism'.
[33] Hansen and Twaddle, *Developing Uganda*.
[34] Faguet and Sánchez, 'Decentralization and Access to Social Services in Colombia'.

governance and good services to the population is to shift the site of governance nearer to the population. However, such a relationship already exists, in the form of citizens' local representative in the national parliament. Local MPs should be well-informed about the development needs and priorities of their local communities, and so ought to be able to improve the targeting and the allocative efficiency of public service delivery in their electorate. MPs in the national parliament also have as their mandate to consult local populations during the formation of the annual budget and workplan of the national parliament and public administration. The introduction of decentralisation, using these same arguments, can therefore be held to be a tacit acknowledgement that decentralisation is necessary where MPs in the national parliament are failing to facilitate this same supply of, and demand for, targeted and good-quality public services at the local level.

Key theoretical concepts relating to decentralisation

In addition to the description of how decentralisation is implemented in the Ugandan context as explained earlier in this chapter, a number of theoretical concepts underpin the notion of decentralisation itself. These concepts are here analysed and contextualised in detail, in order to frame the research. These are the concepts of: nearness and proximity, legitimacy, participation, responsiveness, and the concept of the political economy. Each of these is discussed here in turn, in reference to Uganda.

Nearer to the people

The foundational assumption underpinning the introduction of decentralisation into a specific governance context is that the quality of governance is improved with greater proximity to the population being served. By drawing the site of government decision-making nearer to the people, the relationship between the state and society obtains a greater level of closeness. This literal and metaphorical closeness is assumed to facilitate greater communication, greater accountability, and greater mutual understanding, than that in the relationship between central governments and the population.[35]

[35] Crook, 'Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local–Central Relations'.

The corollary of this argument is to ask what degree of closeness and proximity should be considered the optimal level. In a country such as Uganda, where transport infrastructure is weak and travel is slow, but mobile telephony is becoming increasingly pervasive and radio broadcasts are in wide use, the question remains as to how physically near the government must be to the community in order to facilitate communication and consultation. Also subject to question is the importance of barriers other than physical distance in achieving communication, such as a cultural aversion to calling into question decisions that were made by those in a position of greater social status. The full implications of these questions of the appropriateness of distance as a measure of closeness can be seen when assessing the rapid proliferation of new districts in Uganda, as will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

Legitimacy

The issue of the legitimacy of the government has been especially relevant in the Ugandan context, and has been of particular concern to the ruling national party in Uganda, the National Resistance Movement (NRM). Decentralisation was first formalised in the contemporary era in 1992,[36] as Uganda emerged from the substantial period of civil conflict known as the Bush War. The introduction of Local Councils (LCs) during this time period, as will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2, was an important element of NRM's transition from a military to a civilian government, in that it signalled to the population that consultation and participation would be important elements of the new regime. This marked an important point of distinction from the previous post-independence governments, whose authoritarianism had contributed to significant, damaging social unrest. The introduction of decentralisation was thus an important mechanism for signalling a new era of governance, and for establishing in the minds of the community that NRM's objectives were to be more consultative of the population.[37] The continued success of NRM has been further entwined with decentralisation, as will be discussed in chapters Six and Seven.

[36] Saito, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda'.
[37] Ahikire, 'Localised or Localising Democracy'.

Participation

The concept of popular participation in governance and government decision-making has become an important part of development theory and practice, and is an important element of decentralisation. The notion that the poor themselves should be involved in development planning and poverty-reduction strategies has become accepted by most bilateral and multilateral donor organisations, and supposedly marks a shift from the paternalism of past development practices and models. Participatory governance holds that the citizenry has the right, and the capacity, to be involved in annual budgeting processes and in planning, delivering and monitoring public services. Decentralisation is an important element of this, as the transfer of planning and budgeting of services to sub-national areas is thought to make participation easier, more practical and more affordable.[38] In implementing decentralisation, mechanisms for generating participation at the village level, such as village meetings, are in wide use. The underlying assumption is that by conducting a public meeting, the views of the population are both accurately obtained and recorded.[39] The implications of these assumptions in the Ugandan context are discussed in further detail in section 4.1.

Responsiveness

A fourth concept underpinning the rationales of decentralisation is that of the responsiveness of local governments to the development needs of the community. A common argument made in favour of decentralisation is that local governments are better informed about local development needs than the more-remote central government, and so are better placed to be able to respond to these development priorities.[40] For example, a local government may be able to ascertain that a particular village in the community lacks access to a reliable source of water, and can respond to this by providing funding for the construction of a borehole.

[38] Mansuri and Rao, *Localizing Development*.
[39] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.
[40] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.

However, this assumes that sub-national governments have been granted sufficient autonomy to be able to respond decisively to local development needs and priorities. That is, it assumes that having identified the lack of water supply in a village, the local government has the authority, the social capital and the ability to re-direct funding from an alternative line of expenditure to that of the borehole. In practice, local governments' budgets may be too rigid or prescribed to allow such a transfer, or lack the technical capacity to manage such a change. There is also the possibility of political interference in resource allocation, for example seeing the location of a borehole redirected to be nearby the home of powerful local elites (potentially including councillors themselves).[41] The implications of these potential weaknesses to the practice of responsiveness are discussed in further detail in Chapters Four and Five.

The political economy

Like decentralisation, the term 'political economy' is in wide use throughout the literature. This thesis takes the term to indicate the space in which the factors that drive political decisions intersect with economic priorities. The political economy space is an environment in which institutions are formed, changed and sustained, depending on the forces applied by actors and their motivations.[42] In some circumstances, the political economy space may be the scene of trade-offs, where economic goals are rendered secondarily important to political objectives, at least from the perspective of those in political power. An analysis of the political economy space allows researchers to explore the nexus between production and governance, and ask what political factors drive the decisions that comprise economic policy.[43]

Positioning decentralisation within this political-economy space facilitates an analysis of which political factors and which economic targets influence decisions relating to decentralisation. Research reveals the driving factors behind the decision to implement decentralisation: are the goals of decentralisation political or economic? What do political leaders hope to gain from decentralisation, and to what extent are

[41] Scott, 'Decentralisation, Local Development and Social Cohesion: An Analytical Review'.
[42] Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 'Aiding Economic Growth in Africa: The Political Economy of Roads Reform in Uganda'.
[43] Weingast and Wittman, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*.

their actions constrained by the need to achieve economic growth? Introducing decentralisation represents a substantial change to a country's institutional settings and hierarchies. An analysis of these changes is located within the political economy space in order to expose and make explicit the goals of actors within this space, and how they might leverage decentralisation in order to achieve these goals. As will be discussed in section 2.2, the initial stages of decentralisation in Uganda are themselves reflected through political-economy lenses. Some authors argue[44] that the introduction of decentralisation in Uganda was primarily motivated by domestic, political objectives: specifically, the transition to a civilian government and the establishment of the NRM following the Bush War. For others,[45] decentralisation was motivated by economic and international objectives: that is, governance reforms that sought to build relationships with the international donor community. The analysis of the initial introduction of decentralisation in Uganda through a political-economy lens highlights the differing views on motivations and goals that lead to the introduction of decentralisation.

[44] For example: Terrell G. Manyak and Isaac Wasswa Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda: Governance Adrift', *African Studies Quarterly; Gainesville* 11, no. 4 (2010): 1–24; and G. Shabbir Cheema and Dennis A. Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance: Emerging Concepts and Practices* (Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

[45] Such as Paul Francis and Robert James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation: The Contradictions of Uganda's Decentralization Program', *World Development* 31, no. 2 (1 February 2003): 325–37, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(02)00190-0; and Ehtisham Ahmad and Giorgio Brosio, *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009).

1.2 Background: Uganda's economic and political context

This section presents the political, economic and cultural context in which decentralisation is being implemented in Uganda. This context is significant in that it determines how decentralisation has been implemented, and in which ways the goals of decentralisation's implementation have been affected. The recognition of the political-economy context also allows for an analysis of which actors, motivations, policy goals and resource-allocation decisions have coincided to create the current model of decentralisation in Uganda. This section will address the context in which decentralisation has been implemented, the history of decentralisation in Uganda, and an overview of the goals and rationales of implementing decentralisation in this specific national context.

The political context of decentralisation in Uganda

The contemporary political era began in 1986 in Uganda, when the current ruling party, NRM, first came to power following their military victory in the Bush War.[46] The current President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, was the military leader of the NRA. He became the political leader of NRM, and so President, following the NRA's victory in 1986; he remains the commander in chief of the armed forces. At the time of the Bush War the NRA was dominated by members from the southern region of Uganda, while the forces they defeated were northern; this created the basis for ongoing conflict in the northern regions of Uganda until 2006.[47] The origins of NRM as a military party mean that the military remains a powerful force in Ugandan politics, with ten seats in Parliament reserved for members of the army, known as the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF). Members of the President's family hold important leadership roles in UPDF, including the President's son Muhoozi Kainerugaba, a major general and former Commander of the Special Forces Group, and the President's brother, General Caleb Akandwanaho (also known as Salim Saleh),[48] a prominent member of UPDF.

[46] The political history of decentralisation in Uganda will be discussed in detail in the literature review, in section 2.2.
[47] Branch, 'The Violence of Peace: Ethnojustice in Northern Uganda'.
[48] Mwenda, 'Personalizing Power in Uganda'.

Initially when NRM seized power in 1986, and for nearly two decades thereafter, NRM implemented a system of 'no-party rule'. Parliament was comprised of MPs who were officially independent, rather than members of parties, but who could nonetheless be aligned with parties. Cabinet included MPs who were aligned with opposition parties, in order for parliament to be inclusive of all groups.[49] The rationale behind this system was that competition between political parties had caused civil unrest and conflict in Uganda, and following the destruction of the Bush War, a period of national rebuilding was first required before multi-party elections could be allowed.[50] Museveni went as far as to claim that the Ugandan citizenry was unable to cope with the demands of party politics, so no-party rule had been implemented for their own protection.[51] Corresponding to the no-party system is the concept of NRM as a 'movement': a system in which all citizens are part of the drive towards national development, and neither tribes nor political parties are as important as membership of the national project.[52]

As the international community became more engaged with the Ugandan political economy from the mid-1990s onwards, criticism grew about the lack of political competition in Uganda.[53] Pressure mounted on NRM to allow political parties to officially form, and to undertake political activities such as campaign rallies.[54] This was put into place in time for the 2006 national elections, which were the first to be multi-party in the contemporary era. Also in 2005 a new Constitution was implemented. Museveni used the development of this new Constitution as a rationale for running for President again at the 2006 election, in spite of the two-term limit that was in place for presidential candidates.[55] [56] 2005 also saw the abolition of the Graduated Tax, which had been a poll tax applied to all adult males. The Graduated Tax had been highly

[49] Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa*.
[50] Meredith, *The State of Africa*.
[51] Mugaju, J. and Oloka-Onyango, J. (eds.), *No-Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*.
[52] Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*.
[53] A more detailed discussion of the international community's engagement in Ugandan decentralisation takes place in the literature review, in section 2.1.
[54] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.
[55] F. Golooba-Mutebi, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda', in Saito, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda'.
[56] For some commentators, Museveni leveraged the re-setting of term limits was a form of 'trade', in exchange for 'allowing' multi-party elections to be conducted. See for example: Vokes and Wilkins, 'Party, Patronage and Coercion in NRM's 2016 Re Election in Uganda: Imposed or Embedded?'

unpopular, due in part to the forceful tactics deployed in its collection. The removal of the tax was a popular decision among voters, and thus a crucial election strategy before the first competitive, multi-party election in 2006.[57] However, the tax had formed an important revenue base for district governments. While districts were initially compensated for the removal of the tax, this compensation had largely fallen away by the late 2000s.[58]

Elections are held every five years, with Presidential elections held approximately three days before elections for LC3 and LC5 councils. While political opposition parties have been permitted to form since 2005, their activities have been systematically constrained, with increasing degrees of restriction placed on their operation.[59] For example, and Museveni's rival candidate for President from the opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party, Kizza Besigye, has repeatedly been the subject of actions by the UPDF and the Uganda Police,[60] has been placed under house arrest, and has been charged with treason.[61] In 2018, a period of violence surrounding a byelection in Arua resulted in the hospitalisation, arrest, and court martialling of a number of independent and opposition MPs.[62] This included the prominent politician and former musician Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu (also known as Bobi Wine), whose high profile focused international attention[63] on the incident.

Authors such as Perrot et al.[64] categorise Uganda as a 'hybrid regime', in which the appearance of political competition and democratisation is a screen hiding the government's actual goal: the further entrenchment of the ruling party.[65] There is also evidence of increasing assimilation of NRM, the state, and Museveni.[66] The President encourages citizens to approach him personally with problems that he can address,

[57] Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda', in Saito, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda'.
[58] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.
[59] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[60] 'Kizza Besigye, Main Opposition Candidate in Uganda, Is Arrested Again - The New York Times'.
[61] 'Uganda: Museveni Rival Kizza Besigye Charged with Treason - BBC News'.
[62] '"Tortured" Bobi Wine Charged in Army Court - The East African'.
[63] Kagumire, 'Bobi Wine and the Beginning of the End of Museveni's Power'.
[64] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[65] For example, in the Ugandan context, the introduction of multi-party, competitive elections has not generated genuine democratisation, due to NRM's continued drive for dominance and remaining in power.
[66] Mwenda, 'Personalizing Power in Uganda'.

with the goal of establishing patron-client relationships;[67] these occurrences are then publicised widely. For example, the website 'Uganda Elections 2016' detailed the President's pre-election visit to Budaka District, where the family of a fighter killed in the Amin era appealed personally to the President for assistance:

> We are very poor and we request the President to construct for us houses. … We want the President to help our children go to school and uplift the standards of our family. [68]

Museveni also regularly and openly distributes cash payments (funded from the national budget) to individuals and groups during visits to rural electorates.[69]

Accordingly, voters report a belief that there is little to be gained from voting for opposition parties, for two reasons. Firstly, opposition parties are highly unlikely to win, in which case it is beneficial to be seen to support NRM; and secondly, NRM is better resourced than opposition parties and so can conceivably address an individual's concerns more easily, in pursuit of clientelist goals.[70] Of Uganda's 426 parliamentary seats, 293 (69 per cent) are held by MPs aligned with NRM.

The Ugandan economic context and population trends

Despite recent high rates of economic growth, Uganda remains a low-income country.[71] Uganda's principal industries are agricultural, with coffee, tea and sugar as key exports; the recent discovery of oil reserves in the eastern region of the country could potentially have a positive impact on exports and rates of economic growth.[72] Infrastructure in Uganda remains poor, with a small percentage of roads being tarmacked, and frequent wash-outs of unsealed roads during the rainy season. Rates

[67] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[68] See for example the discussion on the Uganda Elections 2016 website, produced (by the NRM) in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential elections: http://www.elections.co.ug/new-vision/election/1413567/museveni-sironko-mbale
[69] Vokes and Wilkins, 'Party, Patronage and Coercion in NRM's 2016 Re Election in Uganda: Imposed or Embedded?'
[70] Wilkins, 'Who Pays for Pakalast? The NRM's Peripheral Patronage in Rural Uganda:'
[71] United Nations Development Program, 'Human Development Reports: Country Report for Uganda'.
[72] African Development Bank, 'Uganda Economic Outlook'.

of access to motorised vehicles among the population is low, and concentrated in urban centres. Rural households tend to travel by foot, by bicycle, or by motorcycle.[73]

Approximately 75 per cent of the Ugandan population is employed in subsistence farming, growing crops for food on a small, single-household plot.[74] Cash crops[75] are sometimes grown in addition to crops for household consumption, such as coffee, or surplus crops that are sold at market. Farming techniques remain simple, with most ploughing completed using hand tools. The use of livestock to assist in farming is rarely observed. In rural areas, villages are generally not served by shops. Instead, household members travel to a nearby trading post or small town to access markets, to purchase essential non-agricultural supplies such as kerosene, and to seek medical care when needed. Employment sources other than agriculture tend to be concentrated in towns and cities, and include retail services, professional services such as accounting, and tourism and hospitality services. Other large employers include the public service, and the military and police.[76]

Uganda's fertility rate, of six children per woman, is one of the world's highest, and contributes to annual population growth rates of three per cent. Uganda's population is amongst the world's youngest, with an estimated fifty per cent of the population aged under fifteen. Projections of population growth suggest that Uganda's population will reach 50 million people by 2040, compared to 35 million in 2016.[77] This high population growth rate presents a challenge for service delivery, for example with large numbers of additional children needing school places each year. A high population growth rate also generates pressure on agricultural land, with already-modest household farming plots being divided among the large number of children who inherit them. Population growth rates are not predicted to slow, with little emphasis on family planning or reducing family sizes in evidence.[78]

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[73] African Development Bank, 'Eastern Africa's Manufacturing Sector'.
[74] Bank of Uganda, 'Structural Change and Economic Growth in Uganda'.
[75] Of the three districts that were studied for this thesis, farmers in one district (Ntungamo) reported growing coffee as a cash crop, though in small quantities (an average of five coffee trees per household). In the other two studied districts (Pallisa and Lira), farmers reported growing crops for household consumption only, with the exception of some excess crops that were sold at market to raise cash for school fees. However, all crops grown in these two districts were food crops.
[76] Bank of Uganda, 'Structural Change and Economic Growth in Uganda'.
[77] Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 'Statistical Abstract'.
[78] United Nations Population Fund, 'Country Program Action Plan: Uganda 2010-14'.

The Ugandan tribal context and historical significance

Uganda is a highly culturally and linguistically-diverse society, with 40 separate languages spoken.[79] Language divisions are powerful, with even neighbouring tribes not necessarily speaking mutually-comprehensible languages.[80] Tribes and kingdoms have a long history in Uganda, but they are also not universal: some areas of Uganda operate under different traditional systems, such as family or kinship groups. The colonial experience in Uganda resulted in the administrative boundaries between tribes becoming fixed and defined, in order to be easier to categorise and administer.[81] Tribal identities within Uganda had played a substantial role in the civil unrest that followed Independence, and lasted for several decades. For example, Idi Amin formulated a support network amongst soldiers with West Nile heritage, but remained distrustful of officers from Lango or Acholi backgrounds, as these communities were said to have been loyal to (Amin's predecessor as President) Milton Obote.[82]

The implications of the colonial period for tribal identities were still being felt when NRM rose to power in 1986. In the contemporary era, particular tribes are said to be closer to Museveni and other important leaders (the Baganda and especially the Banyankole), leading to accusations of unequal access to opportunities and resources.[83] Officially, however, tribes do not have a formal role in politics or decision-making over state resources, and instead provide guidance and maintain knowledge of cultural practices. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, the assertion of tribal identities has been an important contributing element in the pursuit of additional districts in Uganda.

The Ugandan political economy

The Ugandan political economy is characterised by a number of themes, upon which the national image of Uganda has been built. Key terms are used with distinct

[79] Pawlikova-Vilhanova, 'Swahili and the Dilemma of Ugandan Language Policy'.
[80] Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda*.
[81] Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*.
[82] Meredith, *The State of Africa*.
[83] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'.

meanings in the Ugandan context, differently from their usage in other English-speaking environments, and analysing these local meanings offers an insight into local constructions of the Ugandan image and story. One example of this phenomenon is the use of the word 'producing'. In the Ugandan context, production describes more than the output of economic an economic process. Rather, it describes the contribution that an individual makes to the collective society, including agricultural production, child-rearing, and selling goods at a market. In this usage, 'producing' implies work done by the people, for contribution 'upwards', such as supplying agricultural products that support one's family or can be sold to provide food for others.[84] The mirror image of 'producing' is 'giving', that which is done for the population by its elected leaders. The word 'giving' is applied to actions by Museveni, such as providing funding for scholarships, cash grants to youth groups, or notably, when a new district is created.[85] The use of 'giving' as opposed to 'producing' has a top-down connotation, to match the bottom-up connotation of 'producing'.

This dichotomy emphasises that while the bulk of physical outputs and physical capital is the result of the labour of the population, the work of 'giving' is done by political leaders who control the financial capital generated by this manual work. The assets of the state are distributed by those in political power, and often as a result of a personal[86] meeting or personal connection with those leaders.[87] From the perspective of leaders, their powerful position entitles them to determine the distribution patterns of assets, and to favour those of their own patronage network.[88] From the perspective of villagers working in subsistence farming, the need for them to be producing is constant, while they benefit from giving only occasionally, if at all – and as a result of the personal whim of someone in power.

This reliance on personal connections to the elite for the distribution of resources is an important context for the study of decentralisation, as the predominance of personal patronage networks for resource allocation makes

[84] National Resistance Movement, 'NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress: Taking Uganda to Modernity Through Job-Creation and Inclusive Development'.
[85] Grossman and Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation'.
[86] A vivid illustration of this is the phrase "know-who", used to signify resources gained by knowing the right person (as compared to "know-how", resources gained through personal skill).
[87] Mwenda, 'Personalizing Power in Uganda'.
[88] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'.

transparent the generalised failure of formal institutions.[89] Where formal systems for resource transfer have failed, such as mechanisms for agricultural modernisation, or employment generation in the formal sector, interpersonal connections come to dominate resource transfer instead.[90] In the context of creating sub-national governance institutions such as local governments, a generalised reliance on informal and personal mechanisms presents a challenge to installing formal mechanisms that will be accepted as legitimate. Where citizens have become accustomed to seeking informal and personalised mechanisms for gaining access to the resources they require, the implementation of new governance systems may generate unanticipated outcomes.[91] The dominance of informal mechanisms for accessing resources also has important implications for 'nearness' to the people. Where an individual actor perceives that the best mechanism for obtaining access to resources from the state is through being closely connected to an actor in political power, they are more likely to seek the creation of additional districts, in an attempt to bring these actors nearer.

[89] Hyden, 'Institutions, Power and Policy Outcomes in Africa'.
[90] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'The Master of Institutional Multiplicity? The Shifting Politics of Regime Survival, State-Building and Democratisation in Museveni's Uganda'.
[91] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.

1.3 Motivations for the research

This research arose from an observation that the framing of decentralisation within the existing research literature and development practice is highly consistent, even across dissimilar contexts. Despite the wide variety of national contexts in which decentralisation is implemented, the stated rationales for its introduction are similar across locations.[92] As will be discussed in detail in section 2.1, decentralisation is often framed as a technical reform, that achieves a range of governance and economic targets. The decision to implement decentralisation is often framed as being dominated by central elites, and addresses issues relevant to the central government, such as the goal of establishing downward-reaching patronage networks. Particularly in the Ugandan case, the phenomenon of district proliferation is under-studied, other than to discuss the motivations of elite actors at the central level in seeking the creation of additional districts. The study of decentralisation generally, and district proliferation specifically, in the Ugandan context facilitates an analysis of the connections between decentralisation and the political economy. District proliferation emerges as an important outcome of the interaction between these two elements.

The choice of Uganda as a case study for the research

Uganda is an important case study for the examination of decentralisation because it has one of the most detailed and extensive decentralisation systems in the world.[93] The Ugandan decentralisation system has established 122 district governments,[94] below which are a further four levels of governance hierarchy. The Ugandan decentralisation model is regarded as a model from which other countries are to learn about decentralisation, owing to its perceived success.[95] Uganda has also long been considered a 'donor darling', in that it has emerged from a period of civil war in the 1970s and early 1980s and has demonstrated stability and economic growth over a period of some thirty years.[96]

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[92] Mansuri and Rao, *Localizing Development*.
[93] Ndegwa, 'Decentralization in Africa'.
[94] At 30 June 2017.
[95] Villadsen and Lubanga, *Democratic Decentralisation in Uganda: A New Approach to Local Governance*.
[96] Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.

However, Uganda is also thought to be at a critical moment in its history, with the positive gains arising from this period of stability and growth being eroded by a drift away from genuine democracy.[97] Oppression of political opposition, pressure on free media and a growing police force and military have caused concerns for Uganda's development partners, as have headline-generating restrictions on the human rights of homosexual people. It is also argued that governance in Uganda is moving towards an increasing degree of 'personification', in which governance is seen to be concentrated in the hands of the President personally,[98] with Parliament and other governance institutions becoming increasingly side-lined.[99] Viewed in this light, governance in Uganda is being pulled in two directions: firstly, greater participation in governance and decision-making by the population is driving towards improving democratic governance demands. On the other hand, the move towards centrist politics and the personification of governance at the level of the central government is moving away from participatory and consultative governance.

Decentralisation stands at the heart of this conflict. Decentralisation has as one of its two stated aims that it 'brings government closer to the people'; that is, it allows the population to participate in government decision-making more effectively. On the other hand, decentralisation can be manipulated in such a way as to establish increasing patronage networks, and to further increase the dominance of the central government over sub-national areas. The extent to which decentralisation reinforces either of these trajectories depends on how decentralisation interacts with the political economy of that context. The informal and formal processes at the heart of the ways in which individuals and groups relate to one another will both affect, and be affected by, decentralisation, potentially leading to unforeseen effects for governance, resource-allocation and service delivery.

[97] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[98] van de Walle, 'Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems'.
[99] Mwenda, 'Personalizing Power in Uganda'.

1.4 Contributions of the research

This thesis contributes to an understanding of the political and economic factors that interact with decentralisation in Uganda. By focusing on the driving factors behind the very-rapid creation of new districts since 1986, this thesis addresses the confluence of interests and motivations of actors that drive this phenomenon. District proliferation is presented as the outcome of individual agents' pursuit of their own self-interests, and while these interests are heterogeneous, they coincide at the point of district proliferation. For senior politicians, the creation of additional districts presents an opportunity to extend their political support networks, solidifying their political survival. For elites at the district level, gaining a new district can represent a political and economic strategy, expanding both influence and livelihoods opportunities. For political non-elites at the district and sub-county level, the creation of a new district presents the chance to expand urban livelihoods opportunities, and to gain economic advantages and business opportunities. Finally, for the rural poor, the creation of a new district or sub-county is perceived to bring the promise of new public services being created, in ways that may not have been successful under an old, larger district. District proliferation thus appears to be analogous to development itself, when viewed from the perspective of the grassroot. However, as will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, this perception may not be accurate; instead, worsening social inequality may emerge from district proliferation.

In addition to contributing a detailed understanding of the driving factors underlying district proliferation, this thesis utilises a unique combination of research methodologies to facilitate the analysis of key issues from multiple perspectives. Firstly, the research utilises quantitative data to analyse the public financial management system, and the methods revealed within it for prioritisation of the state's objectives, as will be discussed in section 3.3. Analysing public finance outcomes allows an investigation of the genuine purpose of a state or regime, as the financial commitments made through national budgeting processes render transparent the full goals and priorities of the state. By tracing expenditure outcomes over a two-decade period, the research reveals the patterns, trends and directions of expenditure. Contrasting these quantitative data with the qualitative results revealed through interviews and surveys allows for a discussion of conflicts or inconsistencies that arise

between stated goals and those that are operationalised through public financial management.

Secondly, the research uses qualitative interview methods to ascertain the perspectives of elites in the public service, at several levels of government. The thesis compares and contrasts these perspectives to develop an understanding of central issues relating to public financial management, resource allocation processes and consultation methods from the perspective of these actors. The research then incorporates the perspectives of elected leaders, again at various levels of government, to analyse the motivations and political goals that are the driving incentives for political elites. The research also includes interviews with members of civil society, whose goals are variously to monitor or to influence the actions of government, to discuss the perspectives of those whose positionality from public service is external, and yet intertwined.

Additionally to qualitative interviews, the research uses survey methodologies to include and analyse the perspectives of those at the grassroot themselves: members of households in rural areas, in six locations. Working in subsistence agriculture, these actors are the recipients and users of public services, and those whom government seeks to engage in democratic governance practices. By including the poorest members of society in research relating to public governance, this thesis seeks to contribute an alternative to the top-down perspectives that can characterise research on public-sector governance, and by including the voices of citizens themselves. In this way, the thesis uniquely considers the motivations and perspectives of villagers in rural areas, and asks how they are able to leverage their capabilities and assets in order to maximise their own benefits and goals.

1.5 Overview of thesis

This thesis is arranged as follows. Chapter One has described the context and background of the research, and offered explanations and contextualising of key terminology. Chapter Two positions the research within the field of existing literature, including literature relating to clientelism and patronage more broadly, and examines the concept of decentralisation in historical perspective. It is argued that decentralisation is described by many authors to be a mechanism that achieves governance and economic reforms; this is reflected in writing on the origins of decentralisation in Uganda. Chapter Three describes the analytical framework of the research, and sets forth the methodologies and logical frameworks used for the work. The approach to fieldwork and research methods is also described, as are the limitations of the work.

Chapter Four presents the results of interview-based fieldwork, with a concentration on the perspectives of elite actors. The issue of district proliferation is described, including its implications for successful public financial management. Numerical results from the national budget process are also presented, including conditionality in funding, dependence of districts on the central government, and the dominance of central-government priorities in funding outcomes. Chapter Five discusses the results of fieldwork relating to the perspectives of non-elite actors, including those at the household level. The viewpoints of non-elite actors contribute an alternative framing of decentralisation: rather than delivering targeted service delivery and responsive governance, decentralisation is described as non-impactful at the grassroot level.

Chapter Six draws together the three sets of results from the qualitative and quantitative data collection, and highlights where these support or qualify existing research. This chapter presents an analysis of the three sets of fieldwork results, arguing that the lack of development outcomes generated by decentralisation has fuelled the demand for, and supply of, additional districts. It will be argued that district proliferation is generated by the coinciding incentives of a wide range of actors within the Ugandan political economy, rather than only those of elite actors. Chapter Seven presents a theoretical framework for the arguments emerging from the field research,

and contrasts these to the dominant paradigms of the existing literature. District proliferation will be related to concepts of social inclusion, rural livelihoods and political survival, as actors within the political economy leverage decentralisation to achieve their goals. Chapter Eight concludes the thesis, positions the research within its broader context, and explores areas for further research.

Chapter Two:

Literature review:
Framing and Contextualising Decentralisation

> Provided the Local Governments are elected, monitored by the electorate and the electorate is educated enough to know their rights or is sensitised enough to do so, local governments can be good medicine against bad governance, corruption, and ensuring efficient service delivery.
>
> *- President Yoweri Museveni, Statement to the Commonwealth Local Government Conference, 15 May 2013*

As a result of the popularity of decentralisation as a policy option in developing and developed countries, the literature and analysis relating to decentralisation is substantial. Decentralisation relates to many research areas, including political analysis, economic policy, rural development, accountability, and public administration. While the literature on decentralisation is wide-ranging, there are also distinct themes that can be drawn upon and further discussed. The focus of this chapter will be five key themes that describe the interconnected nature of decentralisation and the broader political economy. These arguments provide the contextual base for the research, and discuss the main concepts and ideas upon which the research will expand. This chapter will review relevant literature regarding the political economy of decentralisation, and will situate the thesis within this literature and within literature regarding African politics more broadly. Key lines of enquiry will be identified that build on arguments made in the existing literature, and that locate the contribution of this research within broader knowledge. The five areas that will be the focus of this literature review are as follows.

First, the links between literature relating to decentralisation and to broader economic and governance reforms will be analysed, using an historical literature

review. From the 1980s onwards, decentralisation was linked to other economic and governance reforms that aimed to reduce 'government failures' that were dominant in economic theories at that time, such as corruption and inefficiency. It will be argued that the framing of decentralisation within the international development policy literature[100] from these eras follows similar trends to overall political-economic neoliberal reforms. The purported benefits that would accrue to countries that undertook decentralisation accordingly shift over time, following trends in broader neoliberal reforms. As a result of this framing of decentralisation as a part of a broader suite of reforms, it will be argued that the current body of literature[101] positions decentralisation as an technical reform that can be utilised to address governance issues.

Second, literature that positions the thesis within broader literature on politics in sub-Saharan African contexts will be reviewed, with a focus on work relating to clientelism and patronage. This section examines literature relating to the linkages that political elites create with voters, in order to influence voting behaviour in their favour. Furthermore, this section will review literature that positions decentralisation in relation to clientelism and patronage, and asks whether decentralisation can be thought to worsen or improve these practices. For some authors, decentralisation exacerbates clientelistic and patronage-based allocation of resources, as it draws political actors nearer to the voters they seek to capture. For others, decentralisation can be viewed as undermining the patronage networks established by national elites, with the result that decentralisation may be resisted or only partially implemented in some contexts. It will be argued in this section that decentralisation alters the institutional context in which clientelistic and patronage-based relationships are situated, and in so doing, contributes to relationships between patrons and clients that based on expectations of reciprocity and exchange.

[100] A distinction is made between the academic and development policy/practitioner literature. The former refers to peer-reviewed publications, while the latter refers to policy and research publications of international development institutions.
[101] With exceptions, such as Jean-Paul Faguet and Caroline Pöschl, *Is Decentralization Good for Development?: Perspectives from Academics and Policy Makers* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Lídia Cabral, 'Decentralisation in Africa: Scope, Motivations and Impact on Service Delivery and Poverty', 2011; and Sandrine Perrot et al., *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*, (Fountain Publishers, 2014), https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01495085.

Third, the question will be analysed of whether decentralisation was introduced into Uganda by external actors, or emerged from the local political and economic context. For some authors,[102] decentralisation arises from the political economy context of the mid-1980s, at the conclusion of the Bush War. For others,[103] decentralisation was introduced in Uganda and driven by external actors in the context of structural adjustment and democratisation reforms. By analysing the origins of decentralisation in Uganda, it is possible to identify the political and economic goals of actors who were involved in its implementation from the late 1980s, as well as of the current era. It will be argued that NRM's goals in introducing decentralisation were initially motivated by attempting to obtain domestic political support, and later by gaining the support of the international development community.

Fourth, the existing technical literature will be surveyed regarding the rapid creation of new districts in Uganda and the fiscal consequences of this policy, while noting that the perspective of those at the 'grassroot' is not always considered in detail within the current body of work. While the issue of district proliferation is frequently framed as a mechanism for generating patronage and political advantage for actors within the central government, the perspectives of those at the village level are not as frequently considered. This thesis contributes to addressing this gap, and considers the objectives and goals of household members, and how the creation of a new district may help these goals to be achieved. This thesis contributes the viewpoint of the grassroot, to complement existing research that focuses on the perspectives and incentives of elite actors.

Finally, the technical literature relating to social inclusion and rural livelihood strategies will be reviewed. This wide literature establishes theoretical models of survival and of gaining access to resources, from the perspective of those at the grassroot level of society. By addressing the strategies that are used by non-elite

[102] For example, Apolo Nsibambi, *Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda : The Quest for Good Governance* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1998); and Elliott Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda', *Conflict, Security & Development* 8, no. 4 (2008a): 427–50.
[103] Such as Paul Francis and Robert James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation: The Contradictions of Uganda's Decentralization Program', *World Development* 31, no. 2 (1 February 2003): 325–37, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(02)00190-0; Ehtisham Ahmad and Giorgio Brosio, *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009); and Florence Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms: Insider Accounts* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010).

actors to gain access to the resources of the state, it becomes possible to view the rapid proliferation of additional districts and sub-counties through this lens of livelihood generation and resource access. This thesis will add to existing literature by arguing that for residents of rural areas, or who are not members of sub-national elites, the creation of additional administrative units represents a perceived opportunity to gain access to improved service delivery and greater employment opportunities. Each of these issues is here discussed in turn.

2.1 Decentralisation and reform: A technical mechanism for economic efficiency and 'good governance'

The academic literature relating to decentralisation from the 1980s until the present decade undergoes a number of transitions. Particular ideas dominate policy, research and practice for a period of time, and are then replaced by new ideas and research about the best ways to generate economic growth, political stability and improvements in the quality of life of citizens. Beginning in the 1980s, ideas of 'government failure' and the supposed superiority of market-based resource-allocation dominate the literature. In the 1990s, the existing literature then moves through alternative theories and models, such as ideas of structural adjustment and liberalisation, including a focus on deregulation and removing the role of the state in managing core utilities. From the 2000s onwards, economic and political theory begins to reckon with some of the negative effects of rapid structural adjustment,[104] and the literature moves towards considering pro-poor economic growth, service delivery, and improving poverty rates world-wide. These phases are discussed in turn below.

Structural adjustment and reducing the size of government

Within the literature on economic reform and development dating from the late 1980s and 1990s, as the Cold War drew to a close, distinct lines of argument emerge about the ideal role of the state in achieving development. According to authors[105] from the neoliberal school, the role of the state should be minimal, with the market mechanism left as unfettered as possible in allocating resources to their most efficient use. Market-oriented reforms were common practices in many countries in this era, along with reducing the size of governments.[106] This position led to recommendations of privatisation of state-owned enterprises, liberalisation of trade and currencies, the reduction of the welfare state, the downsizing of bureaucracies, and deregulation of industries. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) aimed to improve the efficiency

[104] Delius Asiimwe and Frederick Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Pub Ltd, 2007).
[105] For example, Larbi, 'The New Public Management Approach and Crisis States'; Gopal and World Bank, *Decentralization in Client Countries*.
[106] Larbi, 'The New Public Management Approach and Crisis States'.

and effectiveness of government, and were connected to the provision of budget support for developing countries.[107]

Decentralisation is associated with these reforms as a way of creating a leaner, more efficient, central government.[108] For some authors who were writing at this time, decentralisation is beneficial in that it reduces the size of the central government, and so reduces the risk of the central government becoming too dominant in central economic planning, or seeking too great a role in the economy. For example, Hickey and Mohan[109] argue that decentralisation rose in popularity in the sense of avoiding the development of a large, dominant central government. In this context, popular participation in the design and implementation of social services becomes increasingly popular as a development model. Larbi[110] and Young[111] explain the ways in which decentralisation was recommended to developing countries in the 1980s as a mechanism for reducing the size and improving the efficiency of their governments. Decentralisation was thus perceived during this era as a mechanism for reducing the power and size of central governments.

For other authors, the benefit of decentralisation is its use in overcoming the perceived failings of large central government in general. For example, authors such as Krueger[112] argue that decentralisation reduces the size and power of the central government, and so can be used as a mechanism for overcoming corruption, improving efficiency in resource allocation, and improving the responsiveness of cumbersome and slow central governments to the development needs of the community. Furthermore, multilateral organisations such as the World Bank[113] cite decentralisation as a process of improving government knowledge of the community's development needs, so that resources can be targeted more efficiently to the exact priorities of the community.

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[107] William Easterly, 'IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs and Poverty', in *Managing Currency Crises in Emerging Markets* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226155425.001.0001.
[108] Ndegwa, 'Decentralization in Africa'.
[109] Hickey and Mohan, 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development'.
[110] George A Larbi, 'The New Public Management Approach and Crisis States', 1999.
[111] Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*.
[112] Krueger, 'Government Failures in Development'.
[113] Gopal and World Bank, *Decentralization in Client Countries*.

Service delivery and the supply-side of governance

While the emphasis in the development policy literature of the 1980s and 1990s discussed in the previous section was on limiting perceived failures and over-large size of central governments, in the 2000s the focus of development policy literature shifted to service delivery.[114] Influenced by the Millennium Development Goals, this argument is framed in the literature in terms of improving social capital, so that poor individuals can improve their employment opportunities and wages, and so work their way out of poverty.[115] Literature from this time period positions decentralisation as a policy mechanism for improving the targeting of services to areas of greatest need. In this rationale, by taking the site of government decision-making nearer to the population, local governments are able to identify the needs of the community more readily than the central government. As described by Cheema and Rondinelli,[116] for example, public services can then be targeted more accurately to the local populations that are most in need of these services. Rather than providing standardised solutions for every location within a country, services can be delivered that best address local development concerns. [117] Cabral[118] argues that the improved knowledge of local development needs held by local governments compared to the centre enables more efficient service delivery: services are only provided where needed, meaning that fewer resources are required to meet local needs. The World Development Report of 2000-01[119] argues that the benefits of decentralisation for improved targeting of service delivery is based upon participation: local governments must engage with local communities in order to determine their development needs. Planning processes that begin at the village level – known as bottom-up planning – provide a mechanism for the participation of local communities in governance and decision-making over resources.[120]

[114] For example, Sachs and McArthur, 'The Millennium Project: A Plan for Meeting the Millennium Development Goals'.
[115] Baldacci et al., 'Social Spending, Human Capital, and Growth in Developing Countries'.
[116] Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance*.
[117] Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralization and Development: Policy Implementation in Developing Countries*.
[118] Cabral, 'Decentralisation in Africa'.
[119] World Bank, 'World Development Report 2000/2001 : Attacking Poverty'.
[120] Lambright, *Decentralization in Uganda*.

Decentralisation is thought to help improve the quality and reach of service delivery, as a result of a local government's greater proximity to the community.[121] By being located nearer to the population it serves, a local government is argued to be better placed than a more-remote central government to provide services that respond directly to the community's development needs and priorities.[122] Local governments are argued to be more aware of local poverty issues, of any localised problems such as droughts, and more aware of which villages or even households are experiencing poverty – thus improving the supply-side of governance.[123] For example, Kuteesa et al.[124] describe the way in which decentralised service delivery in Uganda was motivated partly by a push to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.[125]

Overall, drawing the site of government closer to the community it serves is argued to lead to improved knowledge of local development needs, thus improving both the responsiveness of government to the community, and the targeting and efficiency of service delivery.

Consultation and participation in decision-making: The demand side of governance

The second common rationale for decentralisation in the current literature describes the ways in which decentralisation is thought to improve the participation by local communities in government decision-making. By moving the site of government nearer to the community, communication between the two groups can improve[126] – even due to such simple factors as easier travel from a village to a district capital. This represents an improvement to the demand side of governance. As argued by Ribot[127] and Craig and Porter, [128] citizens are thus able to communicate with local leaders to complain about a poor-quality local service, for example, in a way that might not be

[121] Scott, 'Decentralisation, Local Development and Social Cohesion: An Analytical Review'.
[122] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*; and Faguet, 'Decentralization and Governance – A Special Issue of World Development, 2013'.
[123] Kuteesa et al., 'Uganda'.
[124] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.
[125] Crook, 'Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local–Central Relations'.
[126] Jutting et al., 'What Makes Decentralisation in Developing Countries Pro-Poor?'
[127] Ribot, *African Decentralization: Local Actors, Powers and Accountability*.
[128] Craig and Porter, 'The Third Way and the Third World: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategies in the Rise of "Inclusive" Liberalism'.

feasible with the central government. In addition, the nearness of local governments under decentralisation can improve transparency. As argued by Mansuri and Rao,[129] due to the greater proximity of sub-national leaders, communities have greater access to information relating to budgets and expenditures, and can assess whether planned expenditures have in fact been delivered. Cheema and Rondinelli[130] describe the ways in which decentralisation came to represent improved governance effectiveness, via improving consultation and participation of the community.

Advocates of decentralisation further argue that local communities are better placed to hold a local government to account for service delivery and public governance than they are a more-remote national government. This is principally due to the presence of local-level elections.[131] At the national level, elections tend to be contested with reference to national issues, and the specific issues affecting a small community are unlikely to be addressed in response to voters' pressure for change. On the other hand, at the local level, voters can hold politicians to account for their responses to local concerns. Where local leaders perform poorly, communities are more likely to be able to assess the performance of sub-national leaders, and to hold them to account via their voting choices in local elections.[132] Ahmad and Brosio[133] also argue that the implementation of decentralisation leads to stronger participatory democracy, with a stronger sense that the community can hold government to account for high-quality services and transparent use of public funds.

Regarding participation, authors such as Cabral[134] argue that decentralisation can improve the empowerment of local people, through increasing their participation in government decision-making. Villadsen and Lubanga[135] argue that decentralisation contributes to good governance by bringing government nearer to the community, meaning that citizens can be more involved in decision-making. Members of the public are better able under a decentralised structure to hold government to account for its

[129] Mansuri and Rao, *Localizing Development*.
[130] Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance*.
[131] Ahikire, 'Localised or Localising Democracy'.
[132] Faguet and Sánchez, 'Decentralization and Access to Social Services in Colombia'.
[133] Ahmad and Brosio, *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?*
[134] Cabral, 'Decentralisation in Africa'.
[135] Villadsen and Lubanga, *Democratic Decentralisation in Uganda: A New Approach to Local Governance*.

use of resources, and to enforce transparency. Citizens are therefore able to 'demand' good governance from their leaders. As Hickey and Mohan[136] phrase this point, decentralisation institutionalises participation. A local government, being nearer to the population it serves, is argued to be better placed to undertake consultation with local communities, and to communicate successfully with their constituents.[137] The two-way communication that will be generated by decentralisation will, by reducing the physical distance between governments and communities, improve transparency, accountability and responsiveness, and so propel governments closer to the ideals of 'good governance' that became popular during this time period. Overall, by holding local leaders to account for their ability to respond to local development priorities, voters are said to be better able to demand good governance under decentralisation than they are under centralised[138] governance structures.

Good governance and anti-corruption

An additional example of the way in which authors writing on decentralisation mirror the language and themes of the broader development policy literature is seen in discussions on 'good governance'. Throughout the 2000s and into the 2010s, development researchers and practitioners developed literature on the indicators of government that constitute successful governance.[139] Amongst these are positive indicators relating to accountability, transparency, strong electoral democracy, and governments that are consultative with the community.[140] Conversely, attributes that are considered negative for governance include corruption, patronage-politics and nepotism. In particular, participation of local communities in governance is thought to improve the accountability and transparency of governments, as citizens can hold government to account for their use of resources.[141] By adopting reforms to improve their accountability, transparency and participatory governance, governments are

[136] Hickey and Mohan, 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development'.
[137] Dauda, 'Democracy and Decentralisation'.
[138] It is noteworthy that these two rationales for decentralisation – improved responsiveness in service delivery, and improved participatory governance – could also be achieved by an area's MP. The rationales underpinning decentralisation implicitly assume that MPs are not succeeding in delivering responsiveness or consultation to local citizens. Decentralisation, and district proliferation, are demanded by citizens because their national-level MPs are failing to deliver these attributes.
[139] Crook and Manor, 'Democratic Decentralisation and Institutional Performance'.
[140] Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*.
[141] Mansuri and Rao, *Localizing Development*.

thought to be able to manage public resources successfully, and to create a strong social contract with the population.

Likewise, throughout this time period, literature relating specifically to decentralisation begins to reflect the same focus on 'good governance' practices that is seen in the overall development policy literature. The greater nearness of the population to government is argued to mean that populations are better able to hold government leaders to account.[142] Decentralisation is described in the literature as a mechanism for reducing corruption and patronage politics. By transferring some powers and resources away from the central government, the scale of the network of the patrons politicians can influence is reduced, as is the possible scale of corruption. For example, Jütting[143] outlines the rationale of this argument: bringing governance and decision-making nearer to the population increases transparency; as a result, the population is better able to identify corruption and punish those who commit it through the ballot box. Decentralisation begins to be recommended as a tool for generating these good-governance behaviours. For example, by moving the sites of government decision-making nearer to the community, authors such as Nsibambi[144] argue that transparency and accountability improve. For Balunywa et al.,[145] the popularity of decentralisation as a policy option derives from citizens' frustration with the poor records of central governments on corruption and embezzlement.

Conversely, other authors[146] argue the opposite: that implementing decentralisation in fact creates more opportunities for the central government to undertake patronage and corruption.[147] In this argument, implementing

[142] Golooba-Mutebi, F., 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda', in Saito, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda'.
[143] Johannes Jütting et al., 'What Makes Decentralisation in Developing Countries Pro-Poor?', *The European Journal of Development Research* 17, no. 4 (2005): 626–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/09578810500367649.
[144] Apolo Nsibambi, *Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda: The Quest for Good Governance* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1998).
[145] Balunywa et al., 'An Analysis of Fiscal Decentralization as a Strategy for Improving Revenue Performance in Ugandan Local Governments'.
[146] For example: Lídia Cabral, 'Decentralisation in Africa: Scope, Motivations and Impact on Service Delivery and Poverty', 2011; and Richard C. Crook, 'Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local–Central Relations', *Public Administration and Development* 23, no. 1 (2003): 77-88.
[147] Muno, 'Conceptualizing and Measuring Clientelism'; Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'; Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.

decentralisation does not eliminate corruption and patronage; rather, these are also decentralised. Authors such as Prud'homme[148] argue that sub-national governments are in fact more prone to corruption than central governments, due to greater expectations of resource 'sharing' caused by closer inter-personal connections at this level. Bardhan and Mookherjee[149] argue that local governments are more prone to capture by vested interests at the sub-national level than the centre. Literature regarding the connections between decentralisation, patronage and clientelism is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

[148] Prud'homme, 'The Dangers of Decentralization'.
[149] Bardhan and Mookherjee, 'Capture and Governance at Local and National Levels'.

2.2 Clientelism and patronage

A second area of the literature relating to decentralisation seeks to position decentralisation within a broader narrative on sub-Saharan African politics, particularly in regards to clientelism and patronage in African countries. As authors such as Scott[150] note, the study of patron-client relationships in developing-country political systems hopes to improve understanding political contestation in these societies, rather than explaining these relationships with reference to factors such as ethnicity or religion. Instead, this literature seeks to examine the informal relationships that exist between political leaders (particularly incumbents) and voters, and the effects of these relationships on policymaking, service delivery and voter behaviour. In light of this examination of relationships, this body of literature frames decentralisation as a political mechanism, and one that has specific goals in regard to creating linkages between the central government to voters at the village level and to sub-national elites. This section describes this literature and positions the thesis within this broader context of the political motivations of African governments implementing decentralisation.

Linkages between leaders and voters

One area of research that is described in the existing literature is the examination of how elected leaders seek to create downward linkages to voters, and the types of informal and relationship-based strategies that are implemented in order to achieve these linkages. Authors such as Helmke and Levitsky[151] argue that the incentives that shape the behaviour of actors in political systems are just as likely to be guided by information rules and systems than formal institutions. The mechanisms that politicians and electoral candidates use to form a connection or link to voters forms part of these informal mechanisms, with Kitschelt[152] arguing that elites choose between various mechanisms of linkage-formation as part of their electoral strategies. Muno[153] adds that practices of clientelism and patronage are examples of these

[150] Scott, 'Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia'.
[151] Helmke and Levitsky, 'Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda'.
[152] Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'.
[153] Muno, 'Conceptualizing and Measuring Clientelism'.

informal rules that govern relationships between voters and political leaders, and that these practices include aspects of exchange, power and dominance, and reciprocity between parties in the relationship.

A number of authors in the existing literature frame decentralisation in terms of these informal linkages between political leaders and voters. This analysis seeks to identify how urban-based national governments can create linkages with voters in rural and remote locations, in order to further the political objectives of political leaders. In this sense, authors argue, decentralisation is undertaken by central governments for explicitly political reasons, with the objective of seeking control of, or influence over, sub-national areas and populations.

For example, as argued by Boone,[154] the motivations of politicians who seek to leverage decentralisation in pursuit of their own political motivations means that true power-sharing between the centre and periphery does not occur – which is a partial explanation for why decentralisation has disappointing compared to its promise. Boone adds that power-sharing only genuinely occurs when sub-national elites are incentivised to advocate for it, and then they have sufficient power to insist on this change. Because the incentives and power of sub-national elites can vary from location to location, even within one country, the outcomes of decentralisation can vary locally as well. Authors such as Cheeseman[155] describe the challenge for central-government elites of engaging with populations in rural areas, even though they lack a physical presence in these areas, and argue that decentralisation forms a mechanism for bridging this gap. Building on this idea, Riedl and Dickovick[156] argue that in Uganda specifically, the GoU uses decentralisation as a mechanism for influencing the population, by building links between Kampala and rural areas.

Following this argument, decentralisation can be viewed as a mechanism for transferring resources to, and improving communication with, voters at the sub-national level – with explicitly political motivations. For Boone,[157] decentralisation is a

[154] Boone, 'Decentralization As Political Strategy In West Africa'.
[155] Cheeseman, 'Patrons, Parties, Political Linkage, and the Birth of Competitive-Authoritarianism in Africa'.
[156] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[157] Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*.

strategy that can allow central governments to interact differently with different regions within a country, depending on their priorities and engagement strategies in each location. In some locations, central-government leaders may seek to usurp the power of competitor elites at the sub-national level, while in other locations, central-government elites may seek to share the power of cooperative local-level elites. These different objectives for different locations will generate different forms of relationships between the centre and the periphery, and different funding and power-sharing relationships may be adopted in various locations. In Boone's terminology, these 'political topographies' result from varying institutional forms that are established by political leaders in different locations, in accordance with their political goals in those sites. Decentralisation can facilitate these political topographies, by providing a mechanism through which national-government leaders can either support or disengage from local-level leaders and elites.

Sjögren[158] builds on this concept of linkages that vary according to geographical space by applying this model to Uganda specifically. Sjörgen argues that decentralisation in Uganda has led to multiple sites of contestation emerging: one is over the creation of additional districts, and the second is over who is able to gain control of a district (either established or newly-created districts). This contestation, according to Sjögren, results in fragmentation of geographical spaces (in the form of district proliferation), and the uneven reach of the state into rural areas. In this sense, while decentralisation has allowed the state to gain access and create linkages with rural areas, the political dynamics of gaining control over decentralised structures generates inconsistent linkages between the centre and different locations within Uganda.

Decentralisation and clientelism

A number of authors in the existing literature argue that as well as linkages between politicians and voters, the use of clientelism specifically is a clear feature of

[158] Sjögren, 'Battles over Boundaries: The Politics of Territory, Identity and Authority in Three Ugandan Regions'.

Ugandan political life. Indeed, Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey[159] argue that the practice of clientelism is becoming an increasingly prevalent practice in Uganda, and has formed an important part of the Ugandan political settlement. Levitsky and Way[160] point to the connections between competitive authoritarianism and clientelism, arguing that the former creates an environment in which clientelism is more likely to emerge, because of the unstable nature of a strong state that nonetheless experiences resistance to their rule from opposition parties.

While Medina and Stokes[161] argue that there are several alternative definitions of clientelism, there are nonetheless common elements that can be identified. Clientelism is defined by Stokes et al.[162] as benefits that are transferred to an individual in exchange for their vote, such as cash, other gifts, or an employment opportunity; the relationship between the principal and the client is understood to be reciprocal, and is hierarchical. Muno[163] emphasises the hierarchical nature of this relationship: an individual of a higher status (patron) uses their influence and resources to direct the behaviour of a lower-status client. Expanding on this, Schmidt et al.[164] explain that clientelist relationships have political relevance where they form a connection between actors who would not otherwise come into contact with each other, such as rural voters and political elites. These authors further emphasise the reciprocity of the clientelist relationship, which they argue is held together by the threat of social sanction if one party does not follow through on the implied commitment. Furthermore, as Stokes et al.[165] explain, in order for clientelism to succeed there must be monitoring of the eventual vote of the client, such that the client perceives that the principal will know (or plausibly could discover) whether the client did in fact vote for the politician who delivered the benefit to them.

Because there is therefore a high informational demand – because the politician must know what kind of gift will induce a voter to change their vote in favour

[159] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[160] Levitsky and Way, 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism'.
[161] Medina and Stokes, 'Clientelism as Political Monopoly'.
[162] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.
[163] Muno, 'Conceptualizing and Measuring Clientelism'.
[164] Schmidt et al., *Friends, Followers, and Factions*.
[165] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.

of the politician, and also know whether they did in fact vote in their favour – this information gathering is conducted by local party loyalists or other brokers.[166] While authors including Hicken[167] note that the extent of clientelism is difficult to measure or quantify, van de Walle[168] notes that the redistributive effect of clientelism may be overstated. This is because the resources that are transferred from central elites to sub-national areas tend to concentrate in the hands of sub-national elites. However, as political competition increases, the number of people who must be included in clientelistic resource transfer also increases, with the result that clientelism tends to have stronger redistributive effects in these circumstances. Clientelism is therefore a form of 'political monopoly', as defined by Medina and Stokes,[169] in which the incumbent politician holds control over the resources that voters want, and can also monitor the voters' actions at the ballot box, so that voters know they will be rewarded (or punished) for voting in particular ways, and act accordingly.

Within this broader discussion of clientelism within sub-Saharan African economies is a more specific set of research on how decentralisation can either improve or exacerbate clientelism. According to Kitschelt[170] and Diamond,[171] because decentralisation results in government agents being brought nearer to the population, the information barrier that clientelism requires (such as knowledge of voter behaviour) is reduced. Kitschelt and Wilkinson[172] add that information can be exchanged through a 'broker' between the voter and the politician, particularly at the subnational level, in the form of a party loyalist. In contrast, Grindle[173] argues that in some locations, the introduction of decentralisation shifts the balance of power away from local 'big men' and towards the national leader, giving the national leader greater control over clientelist structures.

[166] Stokes et al.
[167] Hicken, 'Clientelism'.
[168] van de Walle, 'The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa'.
[169] Medina and Stokes, 'Clientelism as Political Monopoly'.
[170] Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'.
[171] Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*.
[172] Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 'Citizen–Politician Linkages: An Introduction'.
[173] Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*.

However, Wahman and Boone[174] and Wantchekon[175] argue that voters in different locations will respond differently to attempts to capture their vote through patronage. These authors that the clientelistic incentives that compel voters to change their vote will vary across geographical spaces, meaning that central governments will need to approach clientelism in some locations differently from others. Decentralisation can facilitate these different approaches, by allowing voters in one region to be targeted differently from voters in another region; for example, employment opportunities may be a more powerful incentive to adjust one's vote in some locations than in others. Decentralisation allows politicians to target more accurately the resources and opportunities that will be more persuasive to voters in a specific location.

In particular, as described by Kitschelt,[176] clientelism tends to be chosen as an electoral strategy by political leaders where parties are based on ethnocultural connections between voters and politicians. This is because lines of segmentation of voters along ethnocultural lines facilitate that monitoring of clientelist exchanges, and because these exchanges form a club good that incentivise a voter to identify with a particular ethnicity. Building on this argument, Eaton et al.[177] point to the ways in which clientelism under decentralisation can be used to build linkages within specific tribal groups, such as a politician directing resources to communities that share their tribal identity, in order to establish a reciprocal, clientelist exchange of voters for resources. The implications of this connection between the creation of additional districts under decentralisation in Uganda, and this ethnocultural self-identification of voters (as incentivised via a club-good connection to ethnicity) is further discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

Decentralisation as a platform for patronage

[174] Wahman and Boone, 'Captured Countryside? Stability and Change in Sub-National Support for African Incumbent Parties'.
[175] Wantchekon, 'Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin'.
[176] Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'.
[177] Eaton, Kaiser, and Smoke, *The Political Economy of Decentralization Reforms: Implications for Aid Effectiveness*.

A number of authors in the existing literature[178] have raised arguments about the links between decentralisation and patronage politics, including the ways in which patronage can undermine the goals of decentralisation such as improved transparency in governance. Patronage, as described by Stokes et al.,[179] occurs when a person obtains a benefit as a result of their loyalty to, or membership of, a particular political party; this benefit may be in the form of an employment opportunity in the public service, for example. Muno[180] adds to this definition that access to resources or opportunities tend to be based on interpersonal connections. Crawford and Hartmann[181] argue that while decentralisation is broadly thought to improve the standards of governance in African countries, its benefits are undermined by local capture and by patronage politics. This is particularly the case where central-government elites use decentralised governance as a mechanism for creating patron-client relationships with sub-national elites. This might be done as a way of maintaining local-level support, or alternatively fracturing local-level resistance. Diamond[182] adds that decentralisation can worsen patronage, as the movement of government nearer to the population makes political capture easier to achieve.

Eaton[183] adds to this argument by discussing the ways in which decentralisation becomes a stage for power struggles between central- and local-government elites. For example, central-government politicians might view decentralisation as an opportunity to engage in patronage, and bring resources to their home electorate or community. More broadly, Eaton argues that central-government politicians will be supportive of decentralisation when they see short-term political advantages in doing so, but may withdraw their support (or even seek to undermine or destabilise decentralisation) in the future if their incentives shift in that direction. Furthermore, Grossman and Lewis[184] argue that decentralisation can be introduced in which central-to-local patronage networks are known to be problematic for maintaining the central government's power, as a mechanism for disrupting these networks.

[178] For example, Branch and Cheeseman, 'Democratisation, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya'.
[179] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.
[180] Muno, 'Conceptualizing and Measuring Clientelism'.
[181] Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*
[182] Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*.
[183] Eaton, 'Political Obstacles to Decentralisation: Evidence from Argentina and the Philippines'.
[184] Grossman and Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation'.

In addition, Riedl and Dickovick[185] argue that decentralisation can be used to transfer employment opportunities and resources to the supporters of a particular political leader, or to supporters of ruling political parties more generally. They argue that in Uganda, the NRM uses decentralisation as a mechanism for implementing patronage between the central government and sub-national populations. Furthermore, Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey[186] argue that the use of decentralisation as a vector for achieving patronage is used not just by NRM or by political elites, but by Museveni personally. In their argument, they suggest that Museveni engages in 'rent-sharing', in which he either travels to rural areas himself, or sends an intermediary or envoy on his behalf, and uses state resources to directly solve the personal problems facing individual voters. The use of decentralisation generally, and district-creation specifically, are then used as a mechanism for the transfer of resources to local areas. This is reflected in the way in which the decision to form a new district is often announced: by Museveni personally, and often at a campaign rally. Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey conclude that the high cost of creating new districts may eventually impose a limit on using district proliferation for patronage politics in this manner: this "inflationary patronage"[187] may be self-limiting in practice. The use of district proliferation as a mechanism for achieving political influence is the subject of chapters six and seven of this thesis.

However, some authors argue in the opposite direction: that there might be reasons that powerful political elites might resist implementing decentralisation, as it may be disruptive to their established patronage networks. Ribot[188] suggests that the reason democratic decentralisation has progressed slowly in many countries is that elites are reluctant to fully implement decentralisation, where it is disruptive to the patronage systems they have already established; decentralisation in these contexts remains incomplete or only partially implemented. Golooba-Mutebi[189] argues that the nature of sub-national politics means that a well-connected network of patrons will not

[185] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[186] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[187] Barkan, Joel, quoted in Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey.
[188] Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy*.
[189] Golooba-Mutebi, in Saito, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda'.

in practice demand decentralisation from their leaders, provided they are deriving a benefit from their presence in office. Boone[190] argues that central governments will be unlikely to devolve significant amounts of power or resources to areas within a country that contain local elites that are relatively powerful, and over whom the centre may not be able to exert control. In such locations, the central regime may attempt to undermine or usurp the power of local elites, rather than undertaking power-sharing with them, through such mechanisms of decentralisation. Because the power of local elites can vary even within one country, different locations within a single country might receive different decentralisation outcomes from the central government, meaning that the outcomes of decentralisation can vary even within a single country.

Decentralisation, linkages, patronage and clientelism

Finally, a number of authors point to the harm that can be caused to good-quality service delivery and governance by a tendency towards clientelism and patronage in the politics. For example, Stokes[191] argues that clientelism can hinder the effectiveness of democratisation, can reduce the success of elections in accurately expressing the political will of voters, and can worsen the chance of tyranny developing if voters are afraid to vote against their patron. Crook[192] argues that clientelism undermines local taxation systems, as voters expect specific resource transfers in exchange for the payment of taxes. Furthermore, Stokes et al.[193] argue that when there is a tendency amongst voters to vote for politicians who provide them with individual gifts (such as cash or employment opportunities), politicians are in turn incentivised to offer these individual gifts – rather than investing in the delivery of public services or programs. As a result, the distribution of resources becomes individualised, with access to resources determined by connection to a member of the elite, rather than membership of a broader community. Grindle[194] argues that where clientelist and patronage-based relationships exist, these can be time- and resource-consuming to maintain, and can divert resources away from their best use.

[190] Boone, 'Decentralization As Political Strategy In West Africa'.
[191] Stokes, *Political Clientelism*.
[192] Crook, 'Democratic Decentralisation, Clientelism and Local Taxation in Ghana'.
[193] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.
[194] Grindle, *Going Local*.

Furthermore, drawing a connection to decentralisation, Barkan and Chege[195] suggest that decentralisation is more likely to occur in societies that show elements of clientelistic relationships, but are resource-poor. This is because decentralisation allows political leaders to 'give' something to the voter base in order to meet their clientelistic expectations, but without draining significant state resources.

This section has reviewed literature relating to the informal relationships between patrons and clients that create expectations of reciprocity, enforced by the threat of social or resource-based sanctions, that are hierarchy-based and long-term. Decentralisation alters the scale of these relationships by altering the geographic space between patrons and clients (and potentially intermediaries or brokers). In this way, decentralisation creates a context for determining actors' expectations of these exchange-based relationships, and so determines the context in which elite political leaders and voters pursue their own objectives. The implications of this literature for the implementation of decentralisation in the Ugandan context, and in particular for the emergence of district proliferation, is explored in later chapters of this thesis.

[195] Barkan and Chege, 'Decentralising the State: District Focus and the Politics of Reallocation in Kenya'.

2.3 Decentralisation in Uganda: foreign or local?

An area of debate in the existing body of literature relates to whether decentralisation in Uganda is a policy that was introduced by external actors, or whether it is an indigenous policy decision. Many authors refer to the way in which international development agencies encouraged the Ugandan Government to undertake a range of governance reforms in exchange for fiscal support. Others argue that the decentralisation policies that have emerged in Uganda grew from the aftermath of the Bush War in the early 1980s, and helped the NRM government transition from a military government to a civilian government. The question of whether decentralisation is a national or an international policy in Uganda is important for discerning the Government's goals in implementing decentralisation reforms: was their goal to align themselves with the international community, or to galvanise national support? Does the Ugandan Government think of decentralisation as an technical, administrative mechanism, or an explicitly political tool for mobilising the public's support for NRM? This section discusses these questions in greater detail.

Decentralisation as a locally-driven initiative

Several authors[196] within the body of literature relating to decentralisation in Uganda describe the introduction of decentralisation from 1986 onwards as an indigenous process: one that was instigated by the Ugandan Government, to suit its own goals.[197] Decentralisation is argued to have its origins in the Bush War, which lasted from 1980 to 1986. During this time period, the National Resistance Army (NRA), led by now-President Museveni, fought against the forces of Milton Obote and then Tito Okello. In order to be successful in these conflicts, the NRA relied upon the support of the broader Ugandan population, for food supply, road maintenance and

[196] Including authors such as Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance*; Nsibambi, *Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda : The Quest for Good Governance*; Villadsen and Lubanga, *Democratic Decentralisation in Uganda: A New Approach to Local Governance*; Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda'.

[197] According to the GoU Fiscal Decentralisation Strategy 2002, the goals of decentralisation in Uganda are to: "increasing local governments' autonomy, widening local participation in decision making and streamlining of fiscal transfer modalities to local governments in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments". Source: *https://www.lgfc.go.ug/?q=download/file/fid/114*

keeping fighters hidden.[198] In order for this support to be organised, the NRA established a system of Resistance Councils (RCs) in the areas they had gained control over. According to authors such as Hansen and Twaddle, [199] the role of the RCs was to organise the local population in that immediate area to provide logistical support to the NRA, and to collect intelligence from rural areas and provide this to the NRA leadership. As explained by Villadsen and Lubanga, [200] these RCs were organised into a hierarchy, beginning with RC1s at the village level, and rising upwards to RC5 at the level of an administrative district.

Following the success of the NRA in gaining military control over Uganda, the NRA was faced with the challenge of converting itself from a military government to a civilian one. As Kuteesa et al.[201] explain, the support of the population had to be gained as part of this process, so that the government could claim that they were legitimate, civilian leaders with a broad base of support. In particular, as described by Crawford and Hartmann,[202] key leaders in the Baganda community began to agitate for federalism at this time; decentralisation was introduced partly as a compromise compared to this governance arrangement.

In addition, a leadership structure had to be installed at the sub-national level.[203] In order to achieve these goals, the RCs that had been so crucial to the success of the NRA were retained, and converted into Local Councils (LCs). As had been the case with RCs, the LCs were arranged in a hierarchy, with LC1s established at the village level, progressing upwards to LC5s at the district level. An important part of the rationale behind establishing the LC system is that it is highly participatory. Each adult member of the village is automatically a member of the LC1, and is able to vote for the membership of the village's LC1 council, which includes a chairperson, treasurer, secretary, and representatives of women, youths, and the elderly.[204] The inclusion of each adult member of the village in the LC1 means that each member of the

[198] Manyak and Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda'.
[199] Hansen and Twaddle, *Developing Uganda*.
[200] Villadsen and Lubanga, *Democratic Decentralisation in Uganda: A New Approach to Local Governance*.
[201] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.
[202] Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*
[203] Manyak and Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda'.
[204] Devas and Grant, 'Local Government Decision-making—Citizen Participation and Local Accountability: Some Evidence from Kenya and Uganda'.

community is officially a part of the local council system. As Ahikire[205] explains, this is significant, in that it allowed NRA, and then NRM, to argue that each member of every village was an essential part of the NRA's victory over the Obote and Okello forces. As an initial step in building a sense of one cohesive Uganda, the LC system created a sense of belonging and of enthusiasm in participating in the new governance system. It also suggested by authors such as Cheema and Rondinelli[206] that the new government was invested in including each member of the population in the new nation-building process, and that this process would be participatory in nature. The early stages of the decentralisation process in Uganda were thus explicitly political, and aimed to generate the support of the general population for the new NRM government.

Decentralisation is Uganda is also argued to be indigenous to Uganda in that it is built on institutions and systems that were established during the colonial period under British rule, and on structures that pre-date British involvement in Uganda. The administrative districts that were the basis of the RCs, and so became the basis for LCs, have their origins in the colonial period. As described by Mamdani, [207] during the era of British rule in Uganda, the country was divided into districts, each of which had an appointed administrator, in order for indirect rule to be achieved. With a single administrator holding authority over a large land area and large population, the districts system allowed for efficient administration in terms of the labour required. For some districts, the borders of the districts were associated with the borders of the kingdoms that pre-dated British engagement in Uganda, such as the Buganda Kingdom. Where kingdoms did not already exist, such as in northern Uganda, the British administrators grouped families together, gave a name to the group, and defined a geographical boundary around it. As Young[208] describes, in some locations, the created groups were not grounded in existing tribal identities.

> Although Buganda and Bunyoro were large precolonial states whose political identity readily translated into ethnic ideology, most of the districts that served as the basis for British rule fell clearly in

[205] Ahikire, 'Localised or Localising Democracy'.
[206] Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance*.
[207] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*.
[208] Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*.

> the category of 'imagined communities'. Acholi, Madi, Bugisu, Kiga, Teso: all were novel ethnic entities whose district elites acquired a proprietary interest in the nurture and promotion of these identities.

In this way, districts were either created that were co-bordered with kingdoms, or were based on tribal identities that were created for the purpose of anchoring a district. Where smaller tribal groups existed, these tended to be placed underneath a larger kingdom, and were thus marginalised, and made to pledge allegiance to another king than their own.[209] These administrative arrangements have had important social effects, such as entrenching the dominance of some kingdoms and tribes over others, and in formalising the confluence of an administrative unit with the population and language group that resides within it. This effect continues to have important consequences in light of district proliferation, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Decentralisation as an introduced mechanism

A separate line of argument in the literature suggests that decentralisation in Uganda was introduced by external agencies, rather than being developed internally by NRM. In this argument, described by authors such as Green, [210] decentralisation was implemented in Uganda from the 1990s onwards as part of a suite of liberalisation reforms, that were made at the encouragement of multilateral lending agencies. Uganda's perilous financial position at the conclusion of the Bush War rendered it unable to avoid seeking assistance from the international community; with this assistance came pressure for reforms.[211] These liberalisation reforms were undertaken in Uganda in a similar way to those undertaken in other countries, including the implementation of decentralisation. For example, Souza[212] describes the implementation of decentralisation in Brazil, including clear links between decentralisation and wider neoliberal reforms. Cheema and Rondinelli[213] further describe the support a range of countries have received from international donors, to make wide-ranging governance reforms.

[209] Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda*.
[210] Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.
[211] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[212] Souza, 'Political and Financial Decentralisation in Democratic Brazil'.
[213] Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance*.

Initially, the goal of implementing decentralisation was to limit the size of the central government, partly in response to the then-recent history of authoritarianism in Uganda.[214] As time progressed, according to this argument, the goal of implementing decentralisation shifted from reducing the size of the central government to improving service delivery. According to authors such as Francis and James, [215] this was part of a broader shift towards poverty-reduction policies, including Uganda's development of a series of Poverty-Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Kuteesa et al. [216] argue that these reforms were conditional for the receipt of assistance from the World Bank and IMF, including Highly-Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Program debt relief.[217] Decentralisation was seen as an essential element of poverty reduction and the delivery of the PRSP, as it would generate better and more responsive delivery of public services.

In this line of argument, the introduction of decentralisation served several purposes, each of which aligned to the priorities of the international development community. As detailed in the section 2.1, as the international community's priorities for economic development and poverty reduction changed, so too did the stated goals and priorities of introducing decentralisation. This shift in rhetoric can be clearly seen in the Ugandan case, where the rationale for implementing decentralisation in partnership with the international development community shifted over time: from wanting to avoid the creation of a large central government, to wanting to improve service delivery and reduce poverty.[218] Decentralisation is viewed in this body of the literature as a technical mechanism for achieving other policy goals. For these authors, decentralisation was implemented in Uganda on the instruction of international lending agencies, whose power over the Ugandan government was driven by the size of the loans given to the fledgling NRM government in the late 1980s. The Government's dependence on international agencies for financial resources resulted in their inability to resist the proposed reforms put forward, including the implementation of

[214] Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa*.
[215] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.
[216] Ahmad and Brosio, *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?*
[217] International Monetary Fund, 'Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries: Point Report: Uganda'.
[218] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.

decentralisation. Rather than serving NRM's domestic political objectives, such as improving their popularity amongst the local population, decentralisation was instead implemented in order to achieve improved relationships with the international development community.

Decentralisation incentives in the Ugandan context

These two alternative viewpoints within the literature on the origins of decentralisation in Uganda offer different perspectives on the Ugandan Government's motives for implementing decentralisation. For those who consider decentralisation to be an indigenous policy developed by NRM, the motivation to introduce it becomes domestic, and political. For those who consider decentralisation to have been introduced at the will of foreign donors, the motivation for decentralisation becomes international, and administrative.

Understanding the origins of decentralisation in Uganda is important for contextualising the goals of the Government of Uganda (GoU) in implementing decentralisation. Depending on the starting assumptions of different authors, decentralisation can be viewed as an administrative, technical mechanism, or alternatively as a tool for mobilising the political support of different actors for the central government. The emergence of decentralisation in the immediate[219] aftermath of the Bush War suggests that that NRM views decentralisation as an important mechanism for leveraging community support, and improving the legitimacy of government. Indeed, as argued by Ndegwa, [220] the participatory nature of the RCs and then LCs – elected by members of the community at the RC1/LC1 level – marked a shift from the authoritarianism of the Obote and Amin regimes, with a view to reassuring the population of NRM's intended participatory and consultative approach to governance. Nsibambi[221] adds that decentralisation was implemented rapidly after 1986, and was implemented before the international community had begun to play a substantial role in shaping policy in Uganda.

[219] As described by Green (Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda'.), monthly meetings of the RCs, and then LCs, began as early as 1987. These meetings were an important part of the transition from the Bush War to greater stability and the establishment of NRM.
[220] Ndegwa, 'Decentralization in Africa'.
[221] Nsibambi, *Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda : The Quest for Good Governance*.

The research undertaken for this thesis builds on this line of enquiry by analysing the extent to which decentralisation is viewed by the current GoU as a politically-influential mechanism. Given that NRM viewed decentralisation as a way to mobilise the political support of the population in 1986, it is possible to further argue that NRM in the current decade still considers decentralisation in this light. That is, that the NRM considers decentralisation to be an opportunity for generating increased political support for itself amongst voters, as was the case in generating support for the new government in 1986. Accordingly, the research undertaken for this thesis explores the ways in which the central government in Uganda utilises decentralisation as a political tool, in order to generate popular support and to solidify their continued political power in Uganda. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

2.4 District proliferation

The previous section discussed the ways in which decentralisation has potentially be used as a mechanism for political gain by NRM, and how this process is described in the existing literature. This section discusses the treatment in the literature of one example of this use of decentralisation for political gain: the rapid creation of new districts in Uganda. In the Ugandan context, the proliferation of new districts and sub-counties has become a prominent issue, with contestations regarding the sustainability and desirability of this phenomenon occurring publicly.[222] The creation of a large number of new districts in Uganda has accelerated, particularly since 2006, with substantial implications for public financial management. However, district proliferation is not widely studied at present, despite the popularity of decentralisation as a policy reform.[223]

The stated policy rationale for creating a new district is often the same rationale as for decentralisation itself: bringing governance and service delivery nearer to the people. [224] In other words, the process of creating an additional district is described in terms of *further* decentralising governance, or as decentralising more intensively, without a separate rationale being offered for the creation of a specific new district. Amongst authors who have conducted existing research on district proliferation in Uganda, the causes of this phenomenon are frequently attributed to the incentives and motivations of elite-level actors. Two major lines of argument have been put forward in the existing literature. The first, as mentioned earlier in section 2.2, is that creating additional districts allows the central government to expand its patronage system in Uganda, such as rewarding allies at the sub-national level with the creation of a new district.[225] The second is that the leaders of tribes in Uganda have sought to gain recognition and power through the creation of an additional district. Each of these lines of argument will here be discussed in greater detail.

[222] For example, see Lule, 'Uganda'.
[223] Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.
[224] Manyak and Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda'.
[225] For example, Green (Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda'.) describes NRM's use of district creation as a source of patronage, that generates electoral support.

District proliferation as a platform for elite dominance and patronage

Several authors[226] maintain that the primary motivation for the rapid proliferation of additional districts since 1986, and particularly since the mid-2000s, is NRM's desire to maintain strong patronage networks throughout Uganda. In this framing of district proliferation, new districts are created in order to be 'given' to the allies of NRM at the district level.[227] This is because the creation of an additional district generates employment opportunities for sub-national elites, in areas where opportunities for formal, salaried employment may otherwise be rare.[228]

Furthermore, as explained by Eaton at al.[229], if the creation of a new district results in a guaranteed transfer of revenue to the sub-national government, there will be significant political pressure on the central government to establish additional sub-national units. NRM and central-level elites are able to generate popularity and support by themselves by 'giving' a new district – with its corresponding opportunities and resources – to district-level elites in specific electorates.[230]

As explained by Lewis,[231] the decision to award a new district to a particular region can be made in recognition of a particular sub-national elite's demonstrated support for NRM, or to reward areas that vote consistently for NRM. Conversely, the decision to award a district can be withheld from areas whose elites have demonstrated that they are not supportive of NRM, or to areas that tend to vote for opposition political candidates. As Green[232] explains: the creation of a new district, in

[226] See for example: Janet I. Lewis, 'When Decentralization Leads to Recentralization: Subnational State Transformation in Uganda', *Regional & Federal Studies* 24, no. 5 (2014): 571–88; Elliott Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda', *Conflict, Security & Development* 8, no. 4 (2008a): 427–50; and Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000567.
[227] Sjögren, 'Battles over Boundaries: The Politics of Territory, Identity and Authority in Three Ugandan Regions'; Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[228] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*.
[229] Eaton, Kaiser, and Smoke, *The Political Economy of Decentralization Reforms: Implications for Aid Effectiveness*.
[230] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[231] Lewis, 'When Decentralization Leads to Recentralization: Subnational State Transformation in Uganda'.
[232] Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.

which political opponents are then offered employment, has the effect of neutralising these critics of government, and brings them within the NRM movement.

An additional line of argument in the existing literature theorises a link between district proliferation and the introduction of multi-party elections in 2006. As described in section 1.2, following international pressure, the 'no-party rule' system ended in 2006, and authors[233] have linked the rapid creation of new districts to the need for NRM to compete in elections. NRM is able to give new administrative units to allies at the sub-national level, in order to gain their support in elections. Green[234] expands this argument to add that the introduction of political opposition parties in 2005 had the effect of weakening the dominance of NRM. The creation of new districts, which are then 'given' to allies or withheld from opponents, allows some of this power to be regained, through the creation of sub-national patronage networks.[235]

In addition, authors such as Green[236] and Lewis[237] argue that through the creation of new districts, sub-national elites are in turn able to offer employment opportunities to their own patronage network. For example, Mwenda[238] argues that district-level elites are able to establish sub-county-level bureaucracies. Service delivery can also be manipulated to reward allies of district-level elites, such as funding for a healthcare centre. In this way, rather than decentralisation reducing patronage as described by authors discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2, patronage networks can be said to have themselves been decentralised.[239]

Overall, a number of authors in the existing literature argue that district proliferation results from central elites' desire to maintain a sub-national patronage network, in which access to the resources of an additional district are exchanged for electoral support. From here, it is argued that the continued creation of additional districts occurs because of strong incentives for the central government's politicians

[233] For example, see Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda', and Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.
[234] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'.
[235] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[236] Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda'.
[237] Lewis, 'When Decentralization Leads to Recentralization: Subnational State Transformation in Uganda'.
[238] Mwenda, 'Personalizing Power in Uganda'.
[239] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.

to behave in this manner, with few checks or restrictions to prevent the fast creation of a large number of districts.[240] Actors at the sub-national level are incentivised to actively and visibly support NRM, in the hope of being granted a district for themselves, and to have the opportunity to grant employment opportunities to their own patronage network.

District creation and tribal recognition

Another major line of argument that emerges in the body of literature on decentralisation and the political economy in Uganda is that there is a connection between ethnic identities and the way decentralisation is implemented. Specifically, incentives exist for leaders of tribes in Uganda to lobby for the creation of an additional district, in order to gain access to resources and employment opportunities. The creation of an additional district that has borders coinciding with the boundaries of the tribal group means that that tribe has gained self-determination, as well as access to a transfer of revenue from the central government.[241] This is particularly significant where a smaller tribe is able to separate itself from a larger and more prominent tribe, on the basis of the group's self-identification as being culturally or linguistically distinct from the larger group.[242] As described by Schelnberger,[243] the creation of an additional district can transform a minority-ethnicity in a larger district into a majority ethnicity in a smaller one, elevating the status and power of that tribal group over resources.

In this sense, the way new districts are created in Ugandan has introduced an incentive for individuals to align themselves along ethnicity lines, even where this is not normally a characteristic with which they would normally self-identify. As Eaton[244] describes this situation, where sub-national elites have lost power and access to resources due to a governance reform such as decentralisation, they may seek other avenues for laying claim to resources, such as trying to gain control of a specific sub-

[240] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'.
[241] Sjögren, 'Battles over Boundaries: The Politics of Territory, Identity and Authority in Three Ugandan Regions'.
[242] Green, 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Uganda'.
[243] Schelnberger, A.K. 'Decentralisation and Conflict in Kibaale, Uganda', in Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*
[244] Kent Eaton, 'Backlash in Bolivia: Regional Autonomy as a Reaction Against Indigenous Mobilisation', *Politics and Society* 35, no. 1 (2007): 71–102.

national region. Boone and Nyeme[245] add that ethnic identities can be made to become politically relevant by political institutions, when self-identifying along with a particular ethnic identity becomes politically advantageous for an individual. In this way, ethnic self-identification presents an opportunity for sub-national elites to regain access to resources and other opportunities, based on creating a 'club good' of a defined ethnicity.

In some cases, the establishment of a new district based on tribal distinctions within the community has emerged from practices during the colonial period. As described in section 2.3, the British administration in Uganda on occasion established district boundaries that collected together more than one tribal group within an administrative boundary. Members of the smaller groups or kingdoms were instructed to swear allegiance to the tribal leaders or kings of the largest group.[246] Since then, these smaller tribes have remined subsumed under administrative units dominated by a different, larger tribe.[247] By lobbying for the creation of a new district that recognises a smaller tribe that was subsumed in this way, tribal groups can reverse an administrative decision that was made during the colonial era that had effectively erased their tribal identity.[248] Crawford and Hartmann[249] extend this argument by adding that the introduction of decentralisation enables tribal groups to lobby for their own representation, at least at the sub-national level. This gives rise to lobbying for the creation of new districts that align with the borders of their tribal area, as will be discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

Bates[250] further describes the important economic and social role played by tribal connections. In the absence of formal employment and formal institutions for social welfare, tribal connections become the basis for employment, resource transfer and social security. Self-identifying as a member of a particular group, Bates argues, therefore holds economic and social advantages for an individual, and provides an

[245] Boone and Nyeme, 'Land Institutions and Political Ethnicity in Africa: Evidence from Tanzania'.
[246] This situation was in fact first described by the earliest British explorers in Uganda, in the mid-1890s. For example, Captain Raymond Portal's records from this time describe the Basoro people begrudgingly (and temporarily) accepting the rule of the Baganda kings over their land and people. British Mission to Uganda in 1893, *The Diary of the Late Captain Sir General Raymond Portal*.
[247] Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda*.
[248] Thompson, *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and Its Legacy*.
[249] Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*
[250] Bates, 'Ethnicity and Development in Africa: A Reappraisal'.

incentive for this self-identification. Adding to this, Boone[251] suggests that across sub-Saharan Africa, ethnic identities are used as a way of gaining access to resources when competition for resources is intense, with ethnicity being used to delineate inclusion and exclusion from groups with resource access. Authors such as Cammack et al. [252] also describe perceptions that being ruled by one's 'own' people results in lower levels of corruption, and higher levels of trust[253] within the community. Díaz-Cayeros et al.[254] expand on this by arguing that the provision of public goods tends to be made easier where jurisdictional boundaries coincide with ethnocultural boundaries, due to higher levels of trust and cooperation within those communities.

Extending this instrumentalist view of tribal identity, Glickman[255] further argues that it can be advantageous for an individual to self-identify as being from the same tribe as someone in a powerful economic or political position. An individual can then use this common heritage to leverage advantages from that person. As explained by van de Walle[256], while it is too simplistic to ascribe patterns of resource transfer in African countries to primordial factors such as tribal identity, the study of African political economies does suggest that patron-client links can be formed via a pre-existing relationship between a patron and client based on a connection such as a person's tribal identity. Cheeseman and Branch[257] add that while ethnic identities may not always have political significance, they come to gain significance when they become emblematic of other grievances or barriers, such as access to resources.

For authors such as Manyak and Katono,[258] the creation of additional districts based on tribal groups can be an important mechanism for avoiding separatism or violence. By providing a tribal group with its own geographic space, and so its own resource stream, pressures for separatism can be lessened.[259] In this sense, the

[251] Boone, *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*.
[252] Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006'.
[253] Habyarimana et al., *Coethnicity: Diversity and the Dilemmas of Collective Action*.
[254] Díaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Ruiz-Euler, 'Traditional Governance, Citizen Engagement, and Local Public Goods: Evidence from Mexico'.
[255] Glickman, *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa*.
[256] van de Walle, 'The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa'.
[257] Branch and Cheeseman, 'Democratisation, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya'.
[258] Manyak and Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda'.
[259] Glickman, *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa*.

creation of new administrative units that are based on tribal differences can be viewed as a peacekeeping and unifying mechanism. Asiimwe and Musisi[260] expand on this by explaining that a disempowered tribe that is 'given' a new district is then able to offer employment opportunities to their community, known in Uganda as rewarding 'sons of the soil'. Regions of Uganda that are leaning towards separatism, or otherwise arguing that they are under-resourced, can be placated by the central government, via awarding a new district to the group. These concepts are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

While Asiimwe and Musisi[261] and Manyak and Katono[262] argue that leaders of tribal groups seek the creation of an additional district in recognition of their tribal identity, this thesis will ask how these same leaders approach the use of district creation as a mechanism for accessing resources. It will be argued that forming a new district on the basis of ethnicity serves two purposes. Firstly, it allows a tribe to gain the official recognition of the distinct identity of their tribe from the national government, and a tribe can then be said to be distinct from its neighbours. Secondly, the creation of a new district for a tribal group also entitles that group to gain the resources that accrue to controllers of a new district. It will be further argued that for these leaders, the first of these goals can be leveraged in pursuit of the second. In other words, the group's ethnic identity can be operationalised, in order to self-identify as a distinct tribal group, as a mechanism for obtaining a new district. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Six and Seven, the creation of additional districts has created an incentive for tribal groups to define themselves as different and distinct from their neighbours for the specific purpose of gaining access to an additional district.

[260] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[261] Asiimwe and Musisi.
[262] Manyak and Katono, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda'.

2.5 Survival at the grassroot: Club goods, social inclusion and livelihoods

A final thematic area of the literature that emerges relating to decentralisation in Uganda is the extent to which decentralisation can facilitate social inclusion, and enhanced rural livelihoods. The creation of new districts and sub-counties, as described in the preceding section, has been predominantly approached in the literature as an issue of elite dominance and control of sub-national areas. For non-elite and grassroot actors, the creation of new sub-counties can present an opportunity or a strategy to gain access to the resources of the state, particularly where decentralisation has not yet delivered the benefits of development, such as the delivery of public services. This section presents a review of existing literature on techniques used by non-elite and village-level actors to gain access to resources and services, such as rural livelihoods strategies and the generation of social inclusion. The concept of a club good is analysed in the context of social inclusion and exclusion, and implications for distribution of resources. By approaching district proliferation within a framework of social inclusion and resource access, the incentives and motivations of those at the grassroot can be analysed.

Rural and urban livelihoods approaches

A number of authors discuss the nature of rural poverty and survival, and the strategies employed by rural residents in order to secure the survival of themselves and their households. Authors such as Bebbington[263] describe rural livelihoods as being comprised of access to capital,[264] that an individual is able to combine in ways that address their development needs. Scoones[265] describes livelihoods for rural people as being comprised of the assets, capabilities and activities that are required for generating a sustainable means of living. For other authors, such as Chambers and Conway,[266] livelihoods are comprised of capability, equity and sustainability, enabling an individual to access the resources they require to maximise their

[263] Anthony Bebbington, 'Capitals and Capabilities: A Framework for Analyzing Peasant Viability, Rural Livelihoods and Poverty', *World Development* 27, no. 12 (1999).
[264] Bebbington specifies these types of capital as social, produced, natural, human and cultural capital.
[265] Scoones, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.
[266] Conway and Chambers, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.

capabilities. For each of these authors, there are opportunities to expand or improve a person's rural livelihood by expanding their access to capital and to enhance capabilities, through such mechanisms as cooperation with others, or leveraging the resources of the state. Individuals can improve the sustainability of their livelihoods by diversifying their income and capital sources, to be able to withstand shocks more easily.

The literature thus describes the strategies that are implemented by residents of rural areas to maximise their own standard of living, based on the assets, capabilities and capital they have available to them. The literature also indicates the strategies that individuals can implement in order to improve their livelihoods, or to improve the sustainability of their livelihoods. There is a clear link made to cooperation with others, such as through lobbying or organised action, as well as to strategically maximising the benefits of service-delivery policies.[267] In this sense, where individuals in rural areas work together to campaign for improved service delivery, they are acting to improve their capabilities, and so to enhance their rural livelihoods.

Social inclusion and exclusion

Secondly, there is a range of existing literature dedicated to exploring the concept of social exclusion, and the relationship between this concept and poverty. Authors such as Bhalla and Lapeyre[268] argue that while there is some overlap between poverty and social exclusion, the notion of social exclusion allows for a more thorough understanding of the relational aspects of poverty, rather than only the distributional aspects. De Haan[269] argues that the social exclusion concept captures the multi-dimensional experience of poverty, as well as its social ramifications and causes. Sen[270] adds that the social exclusion concept allows authors to identify both the causes and the consequences of poverty, and Kabeer[271] argues that this concept allows researchers to more completely understand the experience of poverty for an

[267] Bebbington, 'Capitals and Capabilities: A Framework for Analyzing Peasant Viability, Rural Livelihoods and Poverty'.
[268] Bhalla and Lapeyre, 'Social Exclusion: Towards an Analytical and Operational Framework'.
[269] Arjan de Haan, 'Social Exclusion: Enriching the Understanding of Deprivation', *Social Exclusion*, 2001, 19.
[270] Sen, 'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny'.
[271] Kabeer, 'Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination Towards an Analytical Framework'.

individual. For authors on this topic, the concept of social exclusion relates to the ways in which social barriers can be both a cause and result of poverty, and provide a more nuanced understanding of the poverty experience than viewing poverty through the lens of a lack of resources.

Relatedly, social inclusion is described as a policy goal, analogous to the notion of pro-poor economic growth. For example, Sen[272] relates the concept of social inclusion to being able to access resources that allow an individual to reach and maximise their capabilities. Policies that use service delivery and social assistance to generate improved access to capital and resources are therefore beneficial for social inclusion. Here, there is a link to decentralisation, as it is argued that decentralisation can be used as a mechanism to transfer resources to the grassroot level, and so improve the social inclusion and capabilities of poorer individuals.[273] Through the concept of social inclusion, decentralisation is framed by authors such as Keating[274] as a pro-poor reform that can assist governments to respond to the particular development needs of local communities.

While decentralisation can be a mechanism for social inclusion, through improved targeting of public services to their areas of strongest need, decentralisation could also unintentionally generate social exclusion instead. For example, where a new district is created, this generates benefits for elites (who have had access to education) in terms of access to paid employment. However, this may have the unintended consequence of widening the gap between educated elites and non-elite actors, who are not able to derive as large a benefit from the creation of a new district. This idea will be explored in greater detail in section 7.4.

The development of club goods and implications for social exclusion

A third area of research relating to the survival and livelihoods strategies of those at the grassroots level is the model of a club good, and the ways in which this

[272] Sen, 'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny'.
[273] Craig and Porter, 'The Third Way and the Third World: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategies in the Rise of "Inclusive" Liberalism'.
[274] Keating, 'Social Inclusion, Devolution and Policy Divergence'.

model relates to public service delivery. A club good is a good that has a defined membership boundary, such that insiders and outsiders to the club are clearly demarcated, and outsiders can be excluded from the benefits of the club.[275] The discussion of club goods offered by Cornes and Sandler[276] describe a group of individuals who each derive a benefit from their membership if the group: a group from which non-members can be effectively excluded. Authors such as McNutt[277] argue that the provision of public services in the form of a club good can be a mechanism for encouraging the supply of public services and utilities where these are under-provided. Helm and Smith[278] add that a sub-national government is best-placed to construct such an arrangement, due to their greater familiarity with local development priorities. In this sense, decentralisation and the creation of a club good are linked: decentralised governance structures are able to address shortages of public services by facilitating service delivery via a club-good membership structure.

This thesis will furthermore ask whether district proliferation itself can be considered analogous to a club good. When a new district is created, this generates an institution that is beneficial to its members, and from which non-members can be excluded. For example, citizens of a town that becomes the capital of a newly-created district are able to benefit from increased employment opportunities, and from new district-level public services.[279] Citizens who are not resident in the district are not entitled to claim these benefits, and become 'outsiders' within the society.[280] The creation of an additional district (or sub-county) thus creates a form of social exclusion,

[275] An example of this 'excludability' is the ability of golf clubs to exclude non-members – those who have not paid a membership fee – from utilising the golfing greens. The benefit of using the green is reserved for club members. Rivalry in consumption is also a feature of club goods, but only at high levels of consumers. While membership of the club is small, each member can utilise the resource as much as they desire; however, when membership becomes large, the good becomes crowded. In general, however, a club good is considered to be non-rival, but excludable, in consumption.
[276] Richard Cornes and Todd Sandler, *The Theory of Externalities, Public Goods, and Club Goods*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[277] Patrick McNutt, 'Public Goods and Club Goods', *Encyclopaedia of Law and Economics*, 1999, 25.
[278] Dieter Helm and Stephen Smith, 'The Assessment: Decentralisation and the Economics of Local Government', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 3, no. 2 (1987).
[279] The creation of an additional district may lead to the establishment of new public services, such a secondary school, as the service-delivery standards for each sector have established the minimum levels of service for a district that include such facilities. However, in many locations across Uganda, a lack of available resources means that districts and sub-counties (particularly those that are newly-created) in practice do not see these new services being established. Nonetheless, the creation of a new district creates a justification for seeking these services from the central government.
[280] As described by Kabeer, in 'Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination Towards an Analytical Framework'.

in which better-educated members of society are able to derive a benefit from the creation of a new district, while non-elite members of the society do not. The research undertaken for this thesis explores in greater depth the links between district proliferation and the notion of a club good, as will be described in Chapter Seven.

Overall, a substantial body of literature addresses the techniques for survival implemented by residents of rural areas in developing countries. The development of the rural livelihoods framework has allowed for a more complete understanding of the range of assets, capabilities and forms of capital that are available to rural residents, moving beyond a focus on financial assets alone. The concept of social inclusion and exclusion has allowed researchers to develop a nuanced understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, and the complexity of the creation of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' within the political economy. The concept of a club good further expands these formulations, arguing that formal institutions can have the effect of excluding non-members from a good, thus reserving its benefits for group members only. The research undertaken for this thesis proposes to apply these models and concepts to the phenomenon of district proliferation, and examine the ways in which the creation of new administrative units creates political and economic effects throughout society. As will be argued, the creation of new districts allows some actors to expand their rural livelihoods, while other actors remain socially and economically excluded from these benefits. These issues are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

2. 6 Conclusion

This chapter has described the existing body of literature on decentralisation, the political economy and district proliferation, both overall and in the specific context of Uganda, and has identified several key themes that drive research in this field. Five principal lines of enquiry have been identified.

Firstly, decentralisation is described in the literature as a key element of broader neoliberal economic and political reforms that have been put in place in many developing countries worldwide, from the 1980s onwards. In the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberal reforms focused on reducing government engagement in the economy and promoting the role of markets in allocating resources. Accordingly, the literature on decentralisation positions decentralisation as a tool for reducing the risk of government failure. In the 2000s and 2010s, as the broader neoliberal reforms shifted to poverty reduction and improving public service delivery, the decentralisation-specific literature too comes to regard decentralisation as a tool for achieving these goals. Key assumptions that exist today first emerged in this era, regarding the ability of decentralisation to deliver better-targeted public services, and improved democratic participation of communities in government decision-making.

Second, literature has been reviewed relating to clientelism and patronage in political relationships in African contexts, and on how these aspects of political relationships are impacted by decentralisation. This literature highlights the ways in which political elites seek to develop informal networks with voters, particularly clientelist relationships, that are reciprocal, hierarchical and long-term, and have the goal of influencing voter behaviour. Voters, meanwhile, view these exchange-based relationships as opportunities to gain access to advantages and resources, particularly where programmatic service delivery and social supports are not in place. Authors within the literature present differing views on whether decentralisation hinders or increases the likelihood and the impact of these relationships emerging and being sustained. Arguments relate to the effect of decentralisation on information-gathering about voter behaviour, on the change of scale in the space between patrons and clients, and the incentives facing both voters and politicians in determining their strategies. Ultimately, the specific motivations and incentives facing specific actors in

a national political system will determine the impact of decentralisation on clientelistic and patronage-based relationships.

A third theme that can be identified within the decentralisation literature is the question of whether the origins of decentralisation in Uganda are local or foreign. The origins of Ugandan decentralisation are important to consider, as these origins reveal the attitudes of NRM to decentralisation, both in the wake of the Bush War and as it seeks to remain in power today. If it is accepted that decentralisation is a local reform that grew out of existing conditions and contexts in Uganda from 1986 onwards, decentralisation can be positioned as a political tool used by NRM to gain public support. From there, it follows that NRM is currently also using decentralisation as a tool for gaining political favour, such as through creating additional districts as a way of expending its patronage and support networks. Conversely, if decentralisation is considered to have been introduced into Uganda at the recommendation of foreign donors, decentralisation is cast as a technical tool. If decentralisation is only viewed as an administrative tool,[281] and one that was introduced into Uganda by external actors, there might be an underappreciation of the ways in which NRM views decentralisation as a mechanism for gaining the political support of the population. This research seeks to use a grassroot-focused analysis contribute to an improved understanding of the explicitly political advantages NRM might hope to leverage via decentralisation, including gaining the support of actors at the village level.

A fourth theme that is observed in the literature on decentralisation is the factors that have driven the very-rapid creation of a large number of districts since the 1990s. While several authors[282] have discussed the problem of district proliferation and noted the concerns it causes for public financial management, there has been a significant focus in the existing research on the motivations of elite actors in driving district

[281] For example, Hickey and Mohan (Hickey and Mohan, 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development'.) describe the World Bank's framing of decentralisation as strengthening popular empowerment and the quality of service delivery.

[282] See for example Diana Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006', *Advisory Board for Irish Aid: Working Paper 2*, 2007, 67; Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000567; Janet I. Lewis, 'When Decentralization Leads to Recentralization: Subnational State Transformation in Uganda', *Regional & Federal Studies* 24, no. 5 (2014): 571–88; and Elliott Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda', *Crisis States Working Papers Series* 2 (2008b).

proliferation. Specifically, existing authors have analysed in detail what are the incentives driving central-government and district-level elites to push for more districts to be created, such as the creation and maintenance of patronage networks that extend into rural areas. While these authors have identified the motivations driving elites, there is comparatively less existing research explaining why those who are lower in the governance system, or not members of the elite, might push for new districts to be created. In addition, while several authors[283] have discussed the phenomenon of leaders of tribal groups arguing for a new district to be created 'for' their tribe, explanations have more-commonly focused on the desire of tribal leaders to gain recognition for their tribe. A less-studied consideration is the way in which tribal leaders can leverage their tribe as the basis for the creation of a new district, as a way of gaining access to the resources of the state.

Finally, a fifth theme that emerges in the overall body of literature relates to the mechanisms and strategies employed by actors at the village level to improve their own quality of life. Authors describe the rural livelihoods framework for analysis, in which a broad and inclusive approach is taken to evaluating the assets, capabilities and capital access of rural residents. These livelihoods can be improved via strategic actions to gain greater access to capital and capabilities, such as through collective action, or leveraging institutions and rules of the state. The awareness of the complexities of rural life that are promoted by the rural-livelihoods approach are in turn reflected in literature relating to social inclusion, which addresses the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty. Social exclusion is described as both a cause and consequence of poverty, affecting relationships between members of society as well as the distribution of resources. A third area of literature describes links between social inclusion and the notion of a club good, in which benefits accrue to members of a group, but outsiders can be effectively excluded. The research undertaken for this thesis analyses the implications and effects of district proliferation for these three concepts, and seeks to relate district proliferation to its social and economic causes and effects.

[283] Such as Crook and Manor, "Democratic Decentralisation and Institutional Performance."

Chapter Three:

Researching Decentralisation:
Analytical Framework, Research Question and Methodologies

As has been described in the literature review in the previous chapter, the existing literature relating to decentralisation in Uganda contains several key themes, and different perspectives exist through each theme. The research undertaken for this thesis will assess the phenomenon of district proliferation in Uganda, but will build on the existing literature in an important dimension: it will include an analysis of the incentives and perspectives driving the behaviour of non-elite actors, including those at the village level. The ways in which decentralisation is affected by its political and economic context will be analysed, as will the ways in which decentralisation in turn affects this context. This dual-directional approach generates insights into the incentives and goals of many actors within the decentralisation system in Uganda, and how their actions affect the implementation of this policy.

3.1 Analytical Framework

This research proposes to draw on the analysis of public financial management decisions, and locate these within a framework of the political economy context of Uganda. In so doing, this research asks how, by whom, and why decisions relating to decentralised public finance are made, and what is the effect of the political economy of these decisions. Rather than considering decentralisation to be a technical mechanism, this research will analyse the impact of decentralisation on the distribution of assets and resources. In this sense, the use of a public financial management (PFM) model of analysis makes apparent the political and economic implications of decentralisation.

This research will investigate which actors are engaged in the decentralisation system, in pursuit of which interests and goals, and how their engagement is reflected in PFM decisions. An examination will be made of the treatment of public resources and public services, and how these are utilised and regulated, by drawing on an analysis of the national budget and its outcomes. By engaging with actors at different levels of the PFM system, this research will move beyond the top-down analysis of decentralisation that is evident in the existing literature, and engage with the end-users of public services. Finally, this research will examine the ways in which the process of decentralisation affects the relationships between those at the expenditure decision-making points and those who are the final beneficiaries of public expenditure.

The analytical framework for the research is comprised of two elements. Firstly, it analyses the ability of decentralisation as a policy to deliver improved targeting of public services, and improved participation of local communities in governance. In so doing, the research analyses the effect of political-economy factors in the local context on decentralisation, and the extent to which these factors are disruptive to the execution of decentralisation policy. Secondly, it analyses the effect of decentralisation on local political economies. The research analyses efforts to transfer resources and public services from the central to regional areas, and examines the ways in which decentralisation contributes to the improved participation of local communities in governance. The research also analyses the ways in which decentralisation policy has been supportive of political objectives, at central, district, and sub-district levels.

Together, these two elements analyse the internal dynamics of the interactions between decentralisation and local political and economic factors. In addressing this these variables' interactions with one another, the research moves beyond an analysis of the *effect* of decentralisation on local political and economic conditions, and instead examines the multi-directional and multi-factoral *interactions* between decentralisation and the local political economy. In so doing, the research identifies the incentives and actions of actors at the central, district, and village levels. By recognising the dynamism of institutions, actors and incentives, the research assesses movements in decentralisation policy and its relationship to political-economy factors as they progress, from the origins of the NRM regime to a more recent focus on consolidation of power and electoral control.

Furthermore, the research analyses the assumptions underpinning decentralisation policy and comments on the reliability of these assumptions in the context of three districts in Uganda. This research will include an analysis of the interactions between social, economic and political dynamics at the central government level, local government level, and between these two levels, as well as addressing the experiences of household members at the village level. Using the overarching concepts of public financial management as a framework, the research undertaken analyses how resources are allocated, and the criteria on which these allocation decisions are made. It will be asked how specific individuals and institutions are able to influence resource-allocation decisions, and the mechanisms through which this rent-seeking and capture of public resources takes place, and how this influence is affected by decentralisation.

Overall, the research can be characterised in three key elements: those of domains, approaches and dimensions. 'Domains' relate to the frames of interconnected dynamics of society, including social, economic and political factors. By considering each of these domains in turn, the research considers the relationships between actors in each of these spaces. The research also considers the connections between different domains, such as links between economic growth and political machinations, and how these relationships have shifted dynamically.

Secondly, 'approaches' are articulated in the research as having been drawn from a range of fields, including economics, political science and development studies. By utilising approaches from multiple disciplines, the research is able to draw on a range of methodologies and approaches in considering the material. Using multidisciplinary techniques to analyse decisions made in the public-finance realm allows the research to assess multiple standpoints and perspectives in the research, including the outcomes of fiscal decisions, the reported experiences of the end-users of public services, and the perspectives of actors in the political and bureaucratic spheres.

Finally, the third element of the research is the 'dimensions' on which individuals in the studied groups diverge, such as their ability to influence decision-

makers, identities, rights, and to leverage resources. For various participants in the research, variation along these dimensions will affect abilities to participate in the decentralisation process, and to derive benefits from its implementation. Those whose personal dimensions place them on a more influential and powerful plane are better placed to realise the advantages of decentralisation, such as access to employment within a decentralised structure, and are more likely to be able to agitate for changes to decentralised institutions that will operate in their favour. Those whose positionality in society place them on a lower plane will be less able to either agitate in favour of change that may be beneficial to themselves, or to leverage benefits from incidental changes to the decentralisation system. In this sense, the initial position of an individual in the socio-economic and political framing of Ugandan society will determine their points of interaction with the decentralisation process, and their ability to leverage benefits from it.

3.2 Research question

This research will examine the relationship between decentralisation and the development of sub-national regions, examined through the lens of public financial management and public service delivery. As described in Chapter Two, the current literature relating to decentralisation features top-down research, focusing on the central government and upper-sub-national governments involved in decentralisation. Questions asked by the current literature focus on the role of decentralisation in improving governance, such as by reducing corruption or improving the responsiveness of government to the community. In this light, decentralisation is presented as an administrative solution or treatment to governance problems. By focusing only on the elites engaged in decentralisation, such as public servants and elected officials, the existing literature has engaged less with how the end-users of public services are affected by decentralisation. Questions of whether members of the public do indeed engage more with government following decentralisation, or whether local governments are indeed more responsive to local development priorities, are rarely asked of the people who would best be able to give a first-hand account of these issues. This research aims to address this gap, by including the perspectives of household-level citizens in an analysis of the decentralisation process.

The research question posed operates in two directions, and asks:

How does the political economy interact with decentralisation in Uganda?

The research thus proposes to approach decentralisation from two standpoints: the first is to ask how the political-economy context in Uganda affects the implementation of decentralisation. The second is to ask in what ways decentralisation affects the political-economy context in which is it implemented. By posing this question in both directions, the intertwined nature of decentralisation and its context will be addressed. Questions will be raised regarding the ways in which decentralisation is complemented, or undermined, or enforced by the political, economic, legal and social variables operating in the Ugandan context, such as political objectives or patronage networks. Conversely, the research will ask how introducing decentralisation into this context will change relationships, power structures and incentives facing actors who are affected by the public financial

management system. This includes politicians, public servants, elites and the citizenry, each of whom has their resource base and claims to power slightly altered by the introduction of decentralisation.

In answering this research question and its two-directional structure, each question is addressed in turn. The research firstly assesses how the context affects decentralisation: in what ways do actors in the Ugandan political-economy utilise and leverage the decentralisation system to achieve their political and economic goals? Then, in the other direction, how decentralisation affects the context: what effect has decentralisation had on political and economic relationships? In practice, these two questions are both intertwined, and compounding: the effects of decentralisation on the political economy generate political effects that in turn affect decentralisation, and so on. Since decentralisation was implemented in Uganda from the 1990s onwards, it has become an essential element of the Ugandan political economy, and an analysis of the Ugandan political and economic spheres would be incomplete without considering decentralisation. By posing the research question as a two-dimensional analysis, this research hopes to untangle the complexities of the relationship between these two areas, examined through the lens of public finance, to examine the effects of decentralisation in the Ugandan context.

3.3 Methodological framework

In order to address the research question, field research has been undertaken using an combining qualitative and numerical-data based research methods. Qualitative approaches comprised a household-level survey in six villages across three districts, and interviews at different levels of government, public service and civil society. Numerical methods involved the collection and analysis of data from the national budget system of Uganda, including transfers of decentralised funds to the district and sub-county levels.

The use of these different research techniques, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data sources, supports the research approach described in the Analytical Framework in section 3.1. These techniques support a political economy approach to the research, by allowing the author to analyse the complexities of the political economy and PFM system in the Ugandan context. It becomes possible to address the multiple political and economic factors that affect decentralisation in Uganda, particularly regarding the issue of district proliferation. The approaches used in the research allow for an institutional analysis to be conducted of the public-finance institutions that are engaged in the decentralisation system, alongside the viewpoints of actors who are seeking to leverage decentralisation to maximise their own benefits and priorities.[284] By undertaking this multi-scalar approach, the author has been able to investigate the perceptions of the decentralisation system through the lenses of a range of actors. These multiple scales of analysis highlight the outcomes of decentralisation as they appear to individuals affected by it. These perceptions have then been compared to the outcomes of the budget process, with areas of contradiction or agreement identified. This section will discuss the methods of data collection utilised in this research, as well as their respective contributions to the lines of enquiry presented in this thesis.

Firstly, a household-level survey was conducted in 108 households, containing questions relating to villagers' experiences of public service delivery, village-level governance, and interaction with higher levels of government. The household-level

[284] Kanbur and Shaffer, 'Epistemology, Normative Theory and Poverty Analysis'.

survey examined the experiences of citizens at the grassroot level, and provided a mechanism for interrogating the claims and arguments made by government and public service elites. Capturing the voices of those at the village level who experience the final outcomes of decentralisation follows from the work of Chambers,[285] who argued that the voices of the poorest should be acknowledged as crucial to understanding poverty's dimensions. Including analysis of villagers' experiences of decentralisation, using their own words and obtained in their own homes, authenticates the research by providing a platform for the full impact of decentralisation to be understood. The household as a unit of analysis recognises the household as both an economic and a social unit,[286] in which economic decisions and activities are undertaken, as well as daily family life.

Secondly, interviews with a range of expert informants were conducted. These were: public servants at the national, district and sub-county levels; elected representatives at the district, sub-county and village levels; and civil society experts working in fields related to decentralisation. By capturing the viewpoints of those who develop and implement decentralisation policy, as well as those who attempt to shape it, the research identifies a range of issues relating to decentralisation. Many interview participants identified the rapid proliferation of additional districts as an issue that caused them concern, while at the same time providing frank insight into the advantages for actors within the system that arise from the creation of new districts. By interviewing experts across different levels of the intergovernmental transfer system, the author was able to identify issues about which different levels of government report different opinions and experiences. That is, when viewing one issue from different angles, varying pictures emerge. For example, differing opinions have been revealed about the extent and nature of participation in village-level development planning. In addition, the research has identified issues on which the opinions of elected officials differ from those of public servants, or those of civil society representatives. Civil society actors, in particular, expressed dissatisfaction with the design and implementation of the transfer system of grants to sub-national governments, as well as with the rapid proliferation of new districts. Finally, by

[285] Chambers, 'Poverty and Livelihoods'.
[286] Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*.

comparing results from expert interviews with results from the household survey, the research identifies areas in which the intended effects of decentralisation policy are not necessarily reflected in the outcomes of the policy, as it is experienced by those at the village level.

Thirdly, in order to provide a quantitative base for analysing the implementation of decentralisation in Uganda, the author collected budget data and other quantitative data such as demographic statistics. These data sources have enabled the author to compare arguments raised in interviews and in the household survey to the official record of what was put in place in the budget. This budget and numerical data, like quantitative data in general, can be said to hold subjective invariance; that another researcher utilising the same data sources would draw similar conclusions in their results. The results of the survey and interviews, as for qualitative data in general, is subject to interpretation by the researcher, and so the meaning ascribed to the results collected will be shaped by the researcher's own experiences and understanding of the material.[287] By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, an objective base of quantitative results has been developed, to which qualitative results can be compared.

[287] Kanbur and Shaffer, 'Epistemology, Normative Theory and Poverty Analysis'.

3.4 Research methods

In addition to undertaking a review of the existing literature[288] on topics relating to decentralisation and district proliferation in Uganda, fieldwork was conducted in order to ascertain the points of view of actors in the Ugandan political economy. Qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were utilised to address the research question, and following from the methodologies described in the previous section, research was conducted as follows.

Timescale of the research

Qualitative and quantitative data was collected over a six-month period from January to June 2016, in Kampala and in three districts.[289] This time period included the 2016 elections, which caused some interruption to the field research. These interruptions were twofold: firstly, public servants were generally not available for interview following the closure of the majority of public service offices in the fortnight surrounding the elections. Secondly, elected officials were engaged in campaigning and travelling, with the result that their office schedules were irregular. Universally, national-level elected officials who were sought for interview were not available throughout the election period. At the district levels and below, there was some variation in the availability of interview participants. Before the election, few elected representatives were available for interview, as they were engaged in campaigning. Following the election, elected officials who had lost office had stopped attending their offices and so were not available, and their replacements had not yet commenced in their roles. This caused some circumstances in which the author was unable to interview an elected candidate in some locations.

Furthermore, in the period of time following the election, if the elected chairperson (LC5 or LC3 Chair) of the local council had not been re-elected, entire

[288] The literature review included archival research relating to the colonial period, as well as literature summarising results and findings by Ugandan and international researchers.
[289] Research authorisation from the Ugandan Government was obtained from Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), in January 2016, following clearance from the research ethics process of University of Cambridge. Authorisations from higher-level authorities in Uganda (such as the Office of the President) was deemed by UNCST not to be required for this research.

councils and indeed entire public service offices were not attending their offices until the replacement official had been sworn in. In one sub-county that was visited,[290] this meant that between the election and the swearing-in of new officials, a period amounting to three months, none of the elected officials or public servants of the sub-county were reported to be attending their offices.

Selection of field sites

The three districts in which research was undertaken were selected to represent the three major regions of Uganda: the north, east and south regions. Within each region, specific districts were chosen randomly.[291] The districts that were chosen in this manner were Pallisa (eastern), Lira[292] (northern), and Ntungamo (southern). The regions of Uganda and the studied districts are depicted in the map on page 29. Within each of these three districts, two sub-counties were selected for further research (for a total of six sub-counties), which were randomly selected within the three districts. Finally, within the two sub-counties in each district, two villages were chosen in which to interview village-level officials, and to conduct the household survey. These villages were not selected at random. Instead, within a sub-county, villages were chosen that were in remote areas (remote from the sub-county headquarters). The purpose of selecting remote villages is to ascertain to what extent villagers who are located in remote locations are able to interact with government or to access social services. The theoretical basis for decentralisation is that the creation of sub-national units should make it possible for citizens at the village level to interact with government, and to have improved access to public services. By selecting villages that are not located close to the sub-county's headquarters, it is possible to ascertain the extent to which this assumption is valid in these locations. If villages that had been selected that are located close to the sub-county's headquarters, given that sub-counties' headquarters are generally pre-existing towns, the ability of decentralisation

[290] Petete sub-county, in Pallisa District
[291] Within the northern region, some districts had to be excluded from selection because they were at the time classified as 'do not travel' in the travel advisories of the UK Government. These were Koboko, Yumbe, Moyo, parts of Adjumani, parts of Amuru, Lamwo, Kitgum, Kaabong, Kotido, Napak, parts of Nakapiritpirit and parts of Moroto districts. These districts are those that are along Uganda's international borders with the DRC, South Sudan and Kenya.
[292] As distinct from Lira Municipal Council

to have generated change in reaching remote, grassroots areas would not be adequately assessed.

The villages chosen, with their district, county, sub-county and parish, are named in the following table 3.1 and are illustrated in the maps of the studied districts on pages 33-37.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Name of village	Kachocha	Ogulia	Chanpeciki	Akwachkoli	Mushasha	Katooma
Parish[293]	Petete	Opwateta	Akano	Abongorwot	Katojo	Kiyaga
Sub-county	Petete	Opwateta	Agur	Amach-Agila	Itojo	Nyabihoko
County	Butebo	Kanyum	Ogur	Erute	Ruhaama	Kajara
District	Pallisa	Pallisa	Lira	Lira	Ntungamo	Ntungamo

3.1 Location details of studied villages

Household survey: The grassroots perspective

Within each village, eighteen houses[294] were selected to conduct the household survey (for a total of 108 surveys).[295] These houses were selected via choosing every third house as a person on foot passes as they progress through the village, which ensured that households closer to the centre of the village were not over-represented amongst the surveyed households. The advice of LC1 Chairs was used in choosing houses, to ensure that houses chosen were all contained within one village (some villages being located close to one another), but not otherwise; the choice of every third house was strictly followed.

[293] In Pallisa District, the sub-counties are comprised of a single Parish.
[294] In Lira District, the term 'house' is taken to refer to a housing compound, where clusters of huts belonging to different members of one family are clustered together. In these circumstances, one cluster of huts was classified as one house, with the interview being conducted at the first house approached geographically from the footpath.
[295] The choice of three districts, six villages and 108 surveys was made to maximise the range of locations studied and the number of survey responses obtained, within the timeframe available.

The time spent in each village was two days, with 18 surveys conducted in each village. (A further two days were spent in each district capital, in order to conduct interviews with district-level elected officials and public servants.) The household survey contained 97 questions, some of which were answered with a binary Yes/No response, some by selecting from a range of pre-determined responses (for example, "Sometimes"), and some with an open-ended free answer. Respondents were also given the opportunity to respond "I don't know" or "I don't want to answer" to each question. Participants were asked questions relating to their experiences of service delivery, consultation and participation in the planning process, and communication with elected leaders within and beyond the district.

Use of research assistants for household survey

Due to the language requirements of conducting research at the household level,[296] research assistants were hired to support the research from Makerere University's College of Business and Management Sciences. These research assistants originate from the selected districts, and so are able to speak both the relevant local languages and English fluently. Three research assistants were engaged to conduct the household survey in each district,[297] with each research assistant conducing six surveys in per village.

Before conducting fieldwork in the six villages chosen, a pilot of the household survey was conducted in Wakiso District, which is a semi-rural district adjoining Kampala, to ensure that the questions posed in the survey were relevant and understandable to household members, and that the responses received were of a high standard. Following the pilot survey, feedback from the research assistants on the relevance of the proposed questions to the lives of household members, as well as the best sequence of questions for the maximum ease of use of the survey, was incorporated into the final survey questionnaire. The list of questions used in the

[296] In the six villages included in the survey, five separate languages are spoken locally, and English is not in widespread use. The local languages are Luo/Lango (in Lira), Lugwere and Ateso (in Pallisa), and Kiga/Rukiga and Nkore/Runyankole (Ntungamo).
[297] The research assistants are: Nobert Aonu Okiror, Margaret Acen and Samson Ochen in Pallisa; Grace Akello, Carol Kay Achak and Sandra Ajok in Lira; and Pamella Eunice, Moureen Akatukunda and Martha Brenda in Ntungamo.

household survey used in the six studied villages is provided at Appendix B, and the fully-disaggregated (by field sites) results are given at Appendix D.

Surveys were conducted in the home of the respondent, by a research assistant, with no one else in attendance (other than the respondent's children, in some households). Surveys were read out loud to the respondent, with the research assistant translating the question from English to the relevant local language, and then recording the respondent's answer (translated back from the local language to English). Before commencing the survey, research assistants were instructed to explain to the respondent (using a pre-prepared script written by the author) that the survey was being conducted for academic purposes, and that observable changes to the respondent's circumstances were not likely to result from participating in the survey. Specifically, improvements to service delivery in the local area were not likely to be generated by the research. Participants were made aware that the research was being conducted by a foreign researcher, from a UK university, rather than someone with a role in Ugandan public policy or public finance. Participants in the survey were likely to be motivated to give the specific answers they gave to the survey by having the opportunity to express their opinions (either positively or negatively) about government services or the performance of government. Respondents were advised that they could at any stage decline to participate in the research, and in addition could answer any question with '*I don't know'* or *'I don't want to answer'*. In survey questions in which respondents were asked to choose their responses from a range of answers, these two possible options were read aloud along with other answers. Research assistants were also instructed to gain the verbal[298] agreement of the participant that they were willing to participate in the research.

The research assistants explained to survey participants that their names were not to be recorded (and were not sought), and it was explained to participants that the survey was marked only with a number which had been pre-filled on the survey form. The number on the form was not connected in any way to the household; for example, there is not a map of the village with the participating households identified. Thus, it

[298] Written permission was not considered to be appropriate in a context where literacy rates at the village level are not high.

was explained to research participants that there was no mechanism through which a particular response to a survey question could be connected to a specific individual or household. There was extremely minimal risk of any research participant experiencing negative ramifications for expressing their views, including for expressing criticism of the government.

While the research assistants do originate from the same regions of Uganda as the studied communities (and thus are able to speak local languages), there was a minimal risk that the participants in the survey would be personally familiar with any of the research assistants. Each of the research assistants confirmed that they had never visited the studied sites before, and indeed many of the research assistants had lived mostly in nearby large towns rather than at the village level. While the surveys were being completed by the research assistants in the home of the participant, the author engaged the LC1 Chair and LC1 councillors (as available) in informal interviews to seek their views on local economic and service-delivery conditions. In addition to gaining insight and information from these interviews, this practice also removed the opportunity for officials to 'sit in' on the survey process being undertaken in the participant's home. This further reduced the risk that participants might feel reluctant to criticise government at any level.

Research assistants were instructed that the first adult member of the household they greeted was the ideal person to complete the survey. They were instructed not to select men in preference to women to complete the survey, and not to ask to speak to the head of the household. Of the 108 people to undertake the survey, 56 were female and 52 male. Of the households selected, there were none in which the first adult encountered was unwilling to participate in the research. Research assistants were also instructed that if there was no one in attendance at the household upon their arrival they were to wait for someone to return home, or to come back later in the day, rather than selecting a replacement household. This was to avoid

preferentially selecting households in which an adult was more likely to be at home during the day.[299]

Image 4: Research assistant Sandra Ajok (L) with survey participant, Village 4, Lira District

Interviews of expert informants

Interviews with expert informants were conducted by the author at four[300] levels of government: at the central-government level; with public servants within ministries; at the district and sub-county levels of both elected officials and public servants; and with elected officials at the village level.[301] In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives from civil society organisations, and with multilateral donor agencies. The sequence of interviews was begun via a purposive sampling technique at MoFPED, allowing for specialised interviews about the budgeting and planning

[299] In practice, because the survey was conducted during the time of year in which crops are planted, household members were in their own fields at the time of the survey (and so within sight of their homes), and returned to their home upon seeing the research assistant approaching. The average time to administer one survey was 75 minutes.
[300] For reasons of time constraints, the parish/LC2 level was not included in the research.
[301] Following the completion of fieldwork, interviews were transcribed, and then coded using Atlas Ti software.

process. As will be discussed in section 3.6, research commenced at MoFPED because, as a former staff member, the author was already on familiar terms with a number of staff in this ministry. This reduced barriers to negotiating access to the research site and research participants. Interviews at MoFPED were conducted with key informants at a range of different levels, from junior technical staff (termed 'desk officer' or 'economist') to senior-management level (termed 'commissioner'). Following these interviews, the choice of interviewee proceeded according to a snowball sampling technique, as expert informants who had already been interviewed recommended relevant officers to interview within other ministries, and arranged these interviews on the author's behalf. This sampling technique was crucial to being able to conduct interviews, as once the author had been introduced by a MoFPED official, it became possible to gain access to technical and management staff in other ministries. The complete list of interview participants[302] is given at Appendix C.

At the sub-national level, initial contact was made with the CAOs of the three chosen districts via telephone, and the author then travelled to the district headquarters of each district. Access to the research site and permission to interview expert informants was granted by each CAO, and subsequently by the LC5 Chair or by an LC5 representative. Interviews were then conducted with senior public servants in each district's government (including the DEO, DHO, District Planner, and DCDO), as well as elected officials where they were available (such as the LC5 Chair, Speaker, or Councillors). At the sub-county level, interviews were conducted in the interviewee's office. LC1-level elected officials (such as LC1 Chair, LC1 Treasurer) were interviewed within their villages.

Collection of budget and quantitative data

Quantitative data was collected from a number of sources. Following a policy decision taken in 2011 to improve budget transparency,[303] Uganda's national budgets

[302] The author has elected to remove the names of research participants from this thesis, and has instead used job title (where this is non-identifying) and interview number only. The list of interview participants with corresponding interview number, job title and date of interview is contained in the Appendix C.
[303] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.

from 2012/13 onwards are available online.[304] Some district budgets are also available at this same site. Furthermore, key informants in the Budget Directory in MoFPED were willing to provide the author with electronic databases containing budget data from 2003/04 to 2015/16.[305] It is worth noting that these electronic files contain data for both Estimates (the planned release of funding to votes[306]) and Releases (the actual release of funding to votes) for each financial year. This information is not contained in the Budget Framework Paper documents, which only contain Estimates figures. It was thus possible to compare the Releases and Estimates figures for the financial years 2003/04 to 2015/16,[307] and so identify areas in which the planned funding indicated to a vote at the beginning of the financial year differed from the actual funding they subsequently received.

Following on from this, the MoFPED Resource Centre contains historical records of national and district Budget Framework Papers, from which it was possible to add additional years of budget expenditure[308] data to those supplied in electronic form. Other forms of quantitative data, such as poverty headcount data and election results, were obtained from the library of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in Kampala. At the sub-national level, district-level quantitative data (such as the number of primary schools in the district) was supplied in Pallisa and in Ntungamo by the District Planners of each district, and in Lira by the Deputy CAO. Village-level quantitative information, such as population sizes, was obtained during interviews with LC1 Chairs in each village.

[304] At www.budget.go.ug. Documents are in PDF format.
[305] The data provided in Excel format were the Estimates and Releases contained in the National Budget Framework Paper from 2003-04 to 2015-16. Note that this is not protected information; it is publicly available as a PDF or in hard-copy format at MoFPED.
[306] The term 'vote' is used in the Ugandan budget to refer to a sector's budgetary line items. For example, the budget lines that fall under the healthcare budget are referred to as 'Health Votes'. A distinction is also made in the budget between funding for centralised budget items ('Central Votes') and decentralised budget items ('Local Government Votes'). To the best of the author's knowledge, the use of the term 'vote' in this way is not intended as a link to the electoral system; the double meaning of the term is coincidental.
[307] The releases data for 2009-10 was missing. This implies that MoFPED does not have an electronic spreadsheet containing the releases from that year.
[308] The budget documents do not contain Releases (the actual releases to each vote) information for each financial year; only Estimates (the planned releases for each vote).

3.5 Limitations of the research

While the research undertaken progressed generally in line with the research design, there were some aspects in which adjustments needed to be made to the research, or variables affected the research in ways that could not be mitigated. Most importantly, the overlap of field research with the 2016 national and sub-national elections posed greater difficulties than had been anticipated in gaining access to elected officials in order to conduct interviews. Two specific groups posed greater challenges than had been expected. Firstly, national-level election candidates[309] engaged in more 'up-country' campaigning than was expected, and thus were not available for interviews in Kampala. Following the election, successful candidates again travelled up-country in order to visit their new electorates, while candidates who were not re-elected were not inclined to be interviewed. Secondly, sub-national election candidates who were not successful in being re-elected essentially ceased attending to their duties in some locations, long before their successor had been sworn in, meaning that they were also unavailable for interviews. This was a particular issue at the sub-county level. In these circumstances, interviews were conducted with the nearest possible member of the community, such as an LC3 Councillor in place of an LC3 Chair. The imperfect substitution of this comprise must be acknowledged.

Secondly, due to the many languages spoken at the sub-national level in Uganda (including five separate languages spoken across the six survey sites) it was necessary to conduct the household survey with the support of research assistants. The research assistants were graduates of Makerere University, and were experienced in conducting household-level research. Nonetheless, the research assistants were required to double-translate the survey: firstly to translate the survey questions from English to the relevant local language, and then secondly the respondent's answers from their local language back to English. This was partly mitigated by making a large number of the questions ones that only required an answer from a set number of responses, such as 'Often' or 'Never'. This minimised the need for the second translation, that from the local language to English. However,

[309] In all, attempts were made to interview five national MPs; three were not available to be interviewed in Kampala and two declined to be interviewed.

for survey questions that asked the respondent to give a full answer, the author is reliant on the accuracy of the translation, in both directions. In addition, a small number of minor errors occurred during the completion of the household survey, such as no answer being recorded for some questions. Given the research assistants' experience with translating from their first languages to English on a daily basis, and their experience in conducting household-based surveys in the past, a high level of confidence can be held that the translations given are as accurate as can be reasonably expected.

Thirdly, there is a risk associated with conducting qualitative research that the researcher wrongly understands the participants to be describing the studied phenomena themselves, rather than their perception and interpretation of them. That is, what is being recorded and analysed is not phenomenon 'X', but the research participants' understanding and reporting of phenomenon 'X'. Throughout this thesis, the author has been careful not to ascribe a sense of universality or truthfulness to the findings gained through qualitative research methods, and have instead reported results in terms of how interview and survey participants described the phenomenon themselves.

Finally, an area of risk that arises from the research is that the researcher might inadvertently over-generalise from the research findings. That is, the author might move from describing and analysing the results of research in six field sites and Kampala, to concluding that the results are representative for the entirety of Uganda. Throughout the completion of this thesis, the author has been mindful of this risk. The author has noted where the obtained research results relate specifically to the six studied villages, or to fewer villages where relevant, and conversely stated where results relate to the national level. Budget results are taken to be representative for the Uganda-wide context, while the household survey is taken to be representative of their own contexts only. While the villages chosen were selected with a degree of randomness, they are nonetheless a small sample size of six villages out of (then) 112 districts. Any suggestion that the results gained through the household survey are representative of all households has been avoided, in order to avoid excessive generalisation from this small sample size.

3.6 The author's positionality regarding the studied community

An important element of conducting research is for the researcher to examine their own positionality relative the studied community, and reflect on how this relative position may affect the collection and analysis of data. Literature relating to researchers' positionalities relative to their studied communities often classify the researcher as an 'insider' or an 'outsider' relative to their studied group. For example, Hellawell[310] defines an insider as a researcher who has *a priori* knowledge of the studied community, as a result of personal knowledge of the community and its members. Hockey[311] offers a further distinction: the researcher may be an insider in the sense of the setting of the research, or in the sense of the peers or individuals being researched. Outsiders, defined in the opposite, are those who are said to be approaching the community of study from beyond its borders, to share no attributes with the community, or have no previous experience of it.

As a result of conducting this research in Uganda, the author offers an alternative positionality: that of the hybrid insider-outsider researcher. In this definition, a researcher shares fully some characteristics with the research group, but other characteristics not at all. Rather than sharing several aspects with the research group to some extent, the researcher shares some characteristics or aspects completely, but in other aspects is a complete outsider. As a result of this hybrid status, the positionality of the researcher relative to the studied community is mixed, and represents an evolving positionality relative to the insider-outsider dichotomy described in the earlier literature.

<u>The author's experience as a hybrid researcher</u>

The author can be positioned using the model of a hybrid insider-outsider researcher, in the sense of clearly sharing some characteristics with the studied group, but being in other ways a clear outsider. In common with the studied group, the author has worked as a public servant, is Anglophone, holds a master's degree, is an

[310] Hellawell, 'Inside–Out'.
[311] Hockey, 'Research Methods -- Researching Peers and Familiar Settings'.

economist, and is middle-class. Differently from the studied group, the author is an Australian national, a non-resident of Uganda, is not religious, is of European ethnicity, and is unable to converse fluently in any Indigenous Ugandan languages. Furthermore, the author's status as an insider in the studied community contains a temporal aspect. This aspect is that several years prior to travelling to Uganda to conduct doctoral research, the author lived in Kampala, and worked as a Senior Economist at MoFPED. The author thus has some familiarity with the contexts of both Uganda and the Ministry, and some familiarity with the interviewees within that Ministry.

The complex positionality of the author relative to the studied community in this case posed unique challenges in terms of the care needed in collecting, interpreting and presenting data. Aspects in which the author is a clear insider and a clear outsider required careful management, to ensure that none of the disadvantages of these positionalities affected the process of research. Secondly, the temporal aspect of having previously been, but no longer, a member of the studied community added a further layer of complexity to the author's positionality relative to the studied group. Finally, the complexity of conducting research as a partial-insider within MoFPED itself posed challenges, as the author's position relative to interviewees in other ministries could be affected by the relationship between those ministries and MoFPED.

Advantages and disadvantages of a hybrid 'insider' researcher

Conducting fieldwork as a complete insider in some respects, and an outsider in other respects, generated certain benefits for conducting research. Firstly, the author was granted access to the research site at MoFPED upon arrival, on the basis of being familiar to the staff of the Ministry. As a result, the author was able to conduct interviews with former colleagues across the Ministry, and those contacts then referred the author on to other contacts in other Ministries and agencies. The author's professional experience as a public servant, albeit in a different national context, proved to be a valuable source of prior knowledge. The similarities in the structure, function and mechanisms of the respective public services of Australia and Uganda allowed pre-existing contextual information. For example, the author is familiar with

the main tasks performed by public servants on a daily basis, such as preparing briefings for ministers, consulting with stakeholders within the community and the public service, and conducting data management and research.

On the other hand, as an insider in respect of being a public servant, there was also the possible disadvantage that the author may bring pre-conceived ideas or assumptions into this research. One of these risks is that experience as a public servant may lead the researcher to believe that the experiences of all public servants are universal. The validity of assumptions made must therefore be identified and assessed.

Advantages and disadvantages of a hybrid 'outsider' researcher

As an outsider to Ugandan society and nationality, the author had initially expected this separation from the studied community to pose barriers to the research, such as challenges in obtaining sensitive information from interviewees. However, in fact this was found to be advantageous in one important way. Specifically, the author's status as a clear outsider to Uganda itself allowed research participants entrust the author with information, particularly when discussing issues that were politically sensitive. While this may seem counter-intuitive, being completely foreign appeared to generate trust successfully. This may be because interviewees felt more comfortable discussing sensitive topics with an outsider, because an outsider to Uganda is unable to cause or generate any repercussions for an interviewee who offers controversial information. For example, many interviewees reported to the author that they were not concerned whether the author recorded their name and job title,[312] as they did not perceive that there would be any risk or consequence of the research being connected to themselves in the future. As a result, research participants seemed to be honest and forthright in their responses, including when discussing sensitive topics or information, and did not appear to hold any reservations about critiquing government institutions or decisions.

[312] Even so, the author has chosen to anonymise the research participants, and has not recorded identifying information about them in this thesis.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research question, methodologies and analytical framework that guides the research, as well as the qualitative and numerical methods used to undertake fieldwork. Drawing on public financial management's focus on the distribution of public resources, the research utilises an analysis of PFM in Uganda to reveal the interaction between decentralisation and the political economy of the local context. By analysing the budget process and results, as well as the perspectives of those involved in the distribution of public resources, the research focuses on the theory of resource distribution under decentralisation and compares it to the lived experiences of those affected by it. The use of research methods that combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, allows for adopting a multifaceted viewpoint to ascertain the outcomes of the decentralisation process.

Field research involved collecting and analysing a combination of budgetary and other numerical data, interviews with a range of elite actors at different levels of government, and a household-level survey of those who are the end-users of public services. By including the viewpoint of the poorest and least powerful members of society, this research centres on decentralisation as a technique for drawing resources from the centre to the periphery, and asks how effectively it is achieving this goal. By seeing the very poorest as deliberate and conscious actors within the decentralisation system, rather than passive recipients of government policy, the research asks how villagers are able to exercise their own voice and agency under decentralised governance structures. By expanding the analysis of decentralisation beyond the experiences of elite actors, comparisons can be made of the lived reality of decentralisation at the village level to the assumptions underpinning decentralisation: that it encourages responsive governance, targeted service delivery, and democratic participation. By adopting this multi-level analytical structure, this thesis tracks the progression of decentralisation from the central level to the grassroot, to ask to what extent decentralisation does genuinely bring resources and power nearer to the people.

As well as designing and undertaking the research methods, the author has reflected on their positionality relative to the studied community, and the strengths and limitations of being a ‘hybrid’ insider-outsider researcher. As a former member of a part of the studied community, but as one who only ever shared some characteristics of the community and not others, the author has a complex and unique positionality relative to the researched community. The has benefited the author in ways such as being able to negotiate access to the fieldwork site more easily than would be possible for a complete outsider-researcher. Conversely, the author might more easily overestimate the accuracy or thoroughness of their understanding of the data, based on their prior familiarity with the context and content of the research. Other disadvantages, such as language barriers at the village level, have been reduced to the extent possible, for example with the engagement of research assistants. Overall, the design of the completed fieldwork attempted where possible to utilise the benefits of the author’s unique positionality as a hybrid researcher, while mitigating disadvantages and risks.

Chapter Four:

Perspectives of elite actors and quantitative results: Driving the supply of new districts

> The question of districts is more driven by political needs than the service delivery needs. It's driven more by the political need. Although, if this question of districts was matched with separate funding, then it would be very successful. The challenge is that these districts come with huge administrative costs, even they are already under-facilitated in the existing districts. So, it simply puts more pressures on the existing resources.
>
> *- Senior Economist, MoES*[313]

The introduction of decentralisation creates a range of effects for actors working within the governance and financial system. Depending on the role and function of each actor, these effects will differ across society. For elite-level actors – those in elected or technical roles in the centre and districts, or within civil society – the decentralisation system creates opportunities to influence the resourcing of sub-national units and public services. For some, decentralisation presents opportunities to gain employment or promotion into a role of influence; for others, decentralisation represents a technical and administrative challenge. Having discussed in Chapter Three the analytical framework and research methods that underpin and frame this thesis, this chapter presents the results of field research, with a focus on two categories of data. Firstly, the results of elite interviews are presented, detailing the results of semi-structured interviews with elected and technical officials at various levels of government, and within civil-society organisations. Secondly, quantitative results are presented relating to the national budget process, illuminating the public financial management outcomes of the decentralised system.

[313] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 65. 06 May 2016.

Following this chapter, Chapter Five presents results from a household-level survey undertaken in six villages across Uganda. The results presented in Chapters Four and Five provide the basis for the analysis in Chapter Six, and discussion and theoretical framing in Chapter Seven. By including results from a household-level survey, interviews with expert informants, and data and documents produced through the national budget process, the research hopes to analyse key lines of enquiry from multiple perspectives. There are several integral themes that emerge from the data, and are repeated throughout different data sources. The consistency with which these themes emerge suggests their centrality in the interaction between decentralisation and the political economy in the Ugandan context. These themes include the persistent low quality of public service delivery, the challenge of providing finance for sub-national governments in order to implement service delivery, and the emergent issue of the proliferation of new districts. This latter issue was central to interviews, with many key informants raising the issue on several occasions. Central-government officials, in particular, were concerned about the cost burden for the budget created by the establishment of new districts. Quantitative data drawn from the budget process allows an analysis of the magnitude and scale of the issues discussed.

Results collected for this thesis indicate that the factors driving the rapid creation of additional districts are complex, may be explicitly political,[314] and involve a greater range of actors than those of the political and economic elite alone.

[314] As argued by Hyden (Hyden, 'Institutions, Power and Policy Outcomes in Africa'.), these results require engaging with informal as well as formal institutions, in the analysis of Ugandan decentralisation – particularly regarding the outcome of district proliferation.

4.1 Results from expert interviews: Financing, staffing and implementing decentralisation

This section describes the results that were obtained from conducting interviews with a range of elite informants, located in Kampala and in three districts across Uganda. The interview participants are comprised of elected and technical staff of several levels of government. This includes staff of central-government agencies, district- and sub-county level administrative and elected officials, and members of civil society. By comparing and contrasting the responses of actors at different levels of the administrative, financial and political systems of decentralisation, it is possible to identify areas where national and sub-national leaders and officials experience decentralisation differently from one another. This section presents summarised commentary from the participating elite interviewees, arranged according to the six most prominent and frequent topics that were raised during the interviews. These topics are: local economic development; the prioritisation of fiscal expenditure; financing and staffing of sub-national governments; political interests in sub-national governance; the quality of service delivery; and the proliferation of new districts. Each of these issues is discussed in turn.

Local economic development and the grassroot: Improving rural incomes

Expert informants at the central government level provided a range of viewpoints relating to local economic development, and the process of transferring economic resources from the centre to the grassroot. A key theme that emerged relates to the importance to the central government of generating improved incomes[315] for those working in rural areas, who are primarily working in subsistence farming. Informants argued that farming will need to progress from subsistence to commercial farming, and for agricultural modernisation to take place, in order to improve the incomes of rural farmers. In order to achieve this modernisation of agriculture and movement to commercial farming, investments are needed in areas such as

[315] *NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress.* https://www.nrm.ug/sites/default/files/manifestoes/NRM%20Manifesto%202016.pdf. Page 22.

processing and packaging of agricultural outputs. For example, as described[316] by a Senior Economist in MoFPED:

> … because the majority of Ugandans depend on agriculture. Every year we talk about it, it's going to be a priority, but it's not working out – we don't see modern farmers, we don't see agriculture that includes the modern techniques. We don't see extension services reaching the common farmer. We don't see agro-processing getting through. .... I think some of the interventions we are implementing are not impacting enough, because – like in agriculture – we must address the entire value chain, that process, right from – maybe a question of agricultural land, it is the inputs, it is the post-harvest handling, it's agro-processing, it's marketing, the research.... An aspect of these.

At the district and sub-county levels, key interlocutors expressed a number of concerns. Interviewees explained that most households have only a small plot of land with which to undertake agriculture, meaning that their economies of scale are low. As a result, farmers' mindset is of providing sufficient food to meet their daily survival needs only, without considering the possibility of expanding production with a view to selling their outputs at a market. Once provided with farming inputs and with agricultural extension services, farmers can consider commercial opportunities as well as meeting their basic consumption needs. A District Production Officer (DPO) explained:[317]

> When their [farmers'] capacity develops, that's when they will do things the right way. They will think positively towards producing for the market, not producing for the stomach only. We work for the day, not for the market. That is how I look at it. So if somebody is to be given something, it should be given after he has underdone proper training, and he is able to take care of such things, and his mindset has been changed.

[316] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 11. 05 February 2016.
[317] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 10. 04 February 2016.

Interview participants raised their concerns with the direction of the GoU's primary program for agricultural development, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) program. This program was modified in 2013 to include a new element, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC),[318] to deliver farming inputs to rural areas via the UPDF. However, interviewees argued that this new program is both inferior to NAADS, and highly politicised. A Principal Economist in the World Bank's Kampala office explains:[319]

> So for example there is the extension services by the National Agricultural Advisory Services, NAADS. The first thing government did was to disband all extension services at the districts. Eh? And they tried to privatise provision of extension services. …. So some of us were saying that the extension service officers in the district governments should have been maintained, to oversee the private extension workers and see that they were providing a good service to farmers. But the government did not do that – they dismantled the entire infrastructure at the district government. And then the private infrastructure completely failed. Now they have handed over the provision of extension services to the military [in Operation Wealth Creation]. Now I don't know whether the military is going to use guns and bullets to shoot extension services to farmers, eh? [laughs] So the idea of – or the need to – increase productivity at the household is a good idea, but the vehicle for doing it... I think that is the challenge.

Key informants at the sub-national level of government also raised a complaint about the central government: that the resources that are provided for improvements in the agricultural sector, such as seeds and farming equipment, are provided in too-small quantities. As a result, there are insufficient resources to be able to cover the entire population. District and sub-county governments are then forced to choose

[318] OWC will be discussed in greater detail in section 7.5.
[319] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.

which households will be the recipients of farming inputs, which generates tension and conflict.[320] A DPO describes[321] his views:

> Because if you bring, like, animals and only for sub-county, only three people get, where do the others get. It will take long for the whole district to be covered. So it needs resources, to realise our intentions.

Central-government dominance of prioritising development needs

One of the core rationales of decentralisation policy is that sub-national governments are better-placed to be aware of, and respond to, local development needs than is the more-remote central government.[322] For this to be the outcome of decentralisation, it is necessary that the development needs and priorities of local communities are recognised in the national planning and budgeting process, so that resources from the national budget can be allocated to these needs. In order to analyse the extent to which the system of bottom-up priority-setting is functioning successfully in Uganda, interview participants were asked for their viewpoints on how well local-level priorities are considered in the Ugandan context.

Dominance of the central government's planning documents

Interview participants from the central government described the dominance in the planning process of the three major economic planning and policy documents: the NDP, Vision 2040, and the NRM Manifesto. Key informants argue that the priorities in the budget will always be a reflection of the priorities set out in these three documents. This means that the local-level consultation processes that are conducted at the village level will have a smaller influence on the budget than will these overarching planning

[320] *Pers.comm*. Speaker of a Sub-County, in an interview with the author, number 39. 21 April 2016.
[321] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 10. 04 February 2016.
[322] Bardhan, 'Decentralization of Governance and Development'.

documents.[323] This scenario is described[324] by an Assistant Commissioner at MoH as follows:

> These [district-level] priorities are arrived at in a participatory manner, but as I told you, there is also the top-bottom. There are certain strategic issues which are agreed on, from the national level, and the districts are just notified that this is where we need to move.

The priorities that are expressed by local communities are only likely to be fully addressed where they coincide with the priorities expressed in the national planning documents. As explained[325] by an Assistant Commissioner at MoFPED:

> The budget process starts with consulting local governments. We do consult them. We hold meetings with them through these regional workshops, and we get all of their priorities. We get their priorities and fit within the available resources. …. Of course they must fit within the umbrella of the NDP – they must set their budget priorities to be that and that, in line with the NDP.

Importance of senior leaders' views in priority-setting

Relatedly, central government officials also described the ways in which the priorities of the senior members of the elected government, such as the President and Cabinet, were important determinants of the priorities that were then actioned in the budget process. This includes sectors other than those included in the national planning documents. A number of respondents[326] identified security and policing as a particular area of interest for the President, and so a priority for budgetary funding. As described[327] by a Principal Economist in MoFPED:

[323] This is in contrast to the theoretical rationales underpinning decentralisation, under which the priorities and development needs of local communities are highly influential in determining expenditure priorities.
[324] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 67. 09 May 2016.
[325] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 63. 06 May 2016.
[326] A Senior Economist at MoFPED explained that security has become a high priority for budget allocations, as administered by MoFPED, due to the President considering this sector to be a high priority. *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 1. 29 January 2016.
[327] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 14. 08 February 2016.

> Of course, we have six sectors that are considered as priority sectors, but they are priority in that they are developmental, or they are human-related. OK the six sectors are works, energy, health, education, agriculture and water. But then, there are also other sectors like security, which is now considered a priority. And JLOS [the justice, law and order sector]. But these other sectors are security, they are not treated as priority sectors, but they are priority in a way, like you always hear the President talk about security, so security issues are always prioritised when they are allocating resources.

These comments suggest that the decisions made by Parliament regarding which sectors to be prioritised for budgetary funding are guided both by the national planning documents, and by the stated priorities of the President and Cabinet members. An Economist at MoFPED explained[328] that once Parliament had identified a particular sector as a priority, MoFPED is "directed" to "find" funding for that sector within the draft budget, and return this draft to Parliament for approval. For this to be achieved, funding to another area may need to be reduced.

Bottom-up planning process: Theoretical dimensions

Key informants at the sub-national government level (districts and sub-counties) highlighted the ways in which they are able to learn of the development priorities and needs of the communities within their constituencies. As a part of the budget process, priorities of villagers are sought through village planning meetings, and then communicated upwards through the councils of the parish and sub-county, to the district. This process is described[329] by a District Senior Finance Officer:

> Under the bottom-up planning, sub-counties organise budget consultative meetings, where the community will participate in giving them their priorities. Then, the district also organise where we invite … those sub-counties management, hoping they have picked information from the people around them, so we sit in that

[328] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 15. 08 February 2016.
[329] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 3. 03 February 2016.

> meeting, and then we get the views from them. That's participatory planning. We invite them, they come and participate with us.

At each stage, the lists of priorities of each area is combined with those of its neighbours, and then amalgamated into a single list. Where the priorities of a particular area can be addressed by the sub-county using its own fiscal resources, this is undertaken; otherwise, the list of priorities of each parish is referred upwards to the district council (LC5). As explained[330] by a District Planner:

> Basically the lower local governments, they may have some suggestions on the projects that they want to include from their areas. But sometimes we ... we measure the priorities. Those that they can finance with their small resources are put – are fixed into their development plans. Those that require heavy investments, like provision of boreholes, which require overhead capital which is much more, and where the skills are at this level, they communicate to us – so we are able to factor in, into the development plan.

Citizen disengagement with bottom-up planning

However, some key informants raised concerns about the ways in which citizens in their constituencies have become disengaged from local planning processes. After participating in planning meetings but not seeing their priorities addressed in subsequent budgets, citizens have become unwilling to participate further. As described by the Chair of an LC3 Council,[331] villagers in his sub-county have become reluctant to attend village planning meetings, due to their perception that the meetings have become repetitive. The same planning issues have been raised repeatedly but not addressed, with the result that participants have lost faith in government processes, and attendance at meetings has fallen.

[330] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 22. 12 February 2016.
[331] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 55. 29 April 2016.

Sub-national government financing, capacity and staffing

A major theme throughout interviews with key elite interlocutors at each level of the governance process is the arrangements relating to the financing and staffing of sub-national governments. A range of issues were raised by expert informants, including the appropriateness of the level of funding received by sub-national governments from the centre, the level of conditionality in this funding, and problems caused by low staffing levels in sub-national governments.

Local revenue-raising outcomes are poor

Firstly, a majority of key informants at the central level of government gave the opinion that sub-national governments' ability to raise local revenue is poor, and that the quantities of revenues raised at the sub-national level is generally low. Interviewees explained that this is problematic, because locally-raised revenue is able to be spent by sub-national governments on the development priorities of the local community. Some interviewees explained that the reason for this low level of locally-raised revenue is that the list of sources of local revenue is small. A Senior Economist in the FINMAP program argues:[332]

> For the districts the main revenue sources are markets, for example. In the sub-counties they have markets. The local service tax, which is mainly got from civil servants themselves. [laughs] Trading licence is very small in most districts – very, very small – because they are overall, the majority of them.... In the municipal council yes, but in the district councils no – it is very small, not very big. So the markets are what is helping them a lot.

Due to this low level of local revenue raising, most sub-national governments are, in practice, dependent on the central government for financial resources. A Principal Economist in MoLG explains:[333]

[332] *PersComm*. Interview with author, number 73. 16 May 2016.
[333] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 77. 23 May 2016.

> Basically, over 90 per cent of the funds to any district comes from the central government. They are dependent on the transfers. Over 90 per cent of their budgets is provided by the central government.

High conditionality in districts' funding

A second issue raised by experts in the central government relates to the high levels of conditionality in the funding that is transferred to sub-national governments from the centre. High levels of conditionality are problematic for sub-national governments, as conditionality pre-determines how the transferred funds can be spent.[334] This limits the ability of sub-national governments to be responsive to local development priorities, and instead effectively renders them agencies of the central government, implementing its priorities instead. Furthermore, the division of transfers from the central government into many sectors and activities causes each pocket of funding to be reduced to a small amount. A Senior Economist at OPM describes[335] this situation:

> I think they receive enough funding. The issue was that the conditions were simply too many; every grant had this and that condition, so they had small, small, small pockets of balances, that they could not put to good use, because a sector said 5 per cent of ten per cent of eight per cent.... but if you get those politicians out of the way, they can contract easily, and spend that money and get quality.

Key interlocutors from civil society organisations expanded on the complex question of whether sub-national governments' role is to implement the national development priorities, or to respond to the development needs of the local community. In particular, informants discussed the ways in which the funding mechanisms in place, with a heavy emphasis on conditional grants, alter the role of

[334] A new series of reforms at MoFPED is attempting to consolidate some of the grants that are transferred to districts, in order to reduce the level of conditionality in funding. These reforms had not been fully completed at the time of this research.
[335] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 74. 17 May 2016.

sub-national governments. While sub-national governments are tasked with seeking the development priorities of their constituent communities and including these in their district's annual workplan, the high percentage of conditionality in the funding they then receive renders this process effectively moot. This point is explained[336] by a Director in the Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC):

> Currently, about 95 per cent of the money going to local governments are conditional grants. And there is that saying that – is it, who pays the piper, calls for the tune. [laughs] So the money come with conditions – do this, do this – so if the needs are not, eh? they have not coincided, that they are the same, you may not get them. So local governments may be implementing what the centre has told them to implement, not what the people have generated.

High vacancy rates in sub-national staffing structures

Finally, central-government informants argue that part of the explanation for the poor performance of some local governments is that their levels of staffing are too low; that is, there are many vacancies in the public administrations of districts and sub-counties. A Senior Economist at OPM explains[337] the link between understaffing and poor performance at the sub-national level:

> Now, why are you a poor performer? So we carry that out – a bit of a study to find out why are you performing poorly? So we got, we brought, unspent balances, and then one of the first reasons that came up was, the reason why you are performing poorly is because you are under-staffed, because we say a district is acutely under-staffed – so that was the main reason.

An Economist at MoFPED describes[338] the scale of the issue:

> An acceptable level [of staffing] is currently 75 per cent [ie. 25 per cent of the roles in the staffing structure are vacant in that district],

[336] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 69. 10 May 2016.
[337] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 74. 17 May 2016.
[338] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 62. 05 May 2016.

> but there are some local governments who are working at 35 per cent.

An Assistant Commissioner for MoH explains[339] the compounding factors that contribute to poor staffing levels among local governments:

> Especially the ones [districts] that were newly created, maybe some five, six years ago – you find that their staffing levels are still very poor, and even attracting staff to those local governments is a challenge. And even those who are attracted – to retain them is a challenge; there is high attrition. …. So there are very many gaps.

Poor capacity of councillors

For sub-national government officials, a number of issues were raised in interviews. Firstly, sub-national government interviewees discussed the areas of conflict they experience within their governments, between the elected officials in the local councils (LC5 and LC3) and the employees of the district and sub-county public services. A major driver of conflict is the differences in educational requirements for employment in the public service, compared to public office. There are no education-attainment requirements for councillors at any LC level; a person who is elected to such a role is able to take up this role even if they have received no formal education. Conversely, roles in the public service require a minimum level of Senior Four (eleven years of formal education), and some roles have a higher standard again. As a result, interlocutors in the public service administrations at the district and sub-county level in the three studied districts described the challenge of working with elected officials with low levels of literacy and numeracy. A District Planner describes[340] the tension that can build up in working relationships between the two branches as a result of this capacity difference:

> They say that role is open to everybody as long as the people have chosen him or her. Someone may come and be poorly educated, and cannot conceive of things which are written by officials from the

[339] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 67. 09 May 2016.
[340] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 5, 03 February 2016.

> Ministries. So you must again – like this [holds up a document] is finalisation of wage payments and gratuities estimates for this financial year – if someone has not, has less than O-level, may not be able to comprehend this. We try to explain, someone doesn't understand, in the end he may think you are undermining him. So, they replace those things, they might think ... We might reach conflict with the government guidelines, he might think you mislead him, you might do wrong things... and then the auditors come to verify and they say you have a problem. You are the technical person, you are supposed to have guided, but the people you are guiding are refusing to be guided.

In civil society organisations, key informants also discussed the manner in which the low education levels of elected officials generates problematic outcomes in decision-making. Interviewees from this group offered political explanations for why this situation persists of not requiring a minimum education level for councillors. A Professor of Makerere University explains[341] two reasons this situation persists, namely the loyalty of under-educated councillors and their acceptance of low salaries:

> It is being maintained because of two major reasons. One major reason is that the majority of these mediocre fellows, or the non-elite, they are the majority and they can easily give support to the ruling government. So in other words, they are not a headache, OK? to the party in power. …. They are easier to manage, and they can easily play a yes-yes-yes supportive role to the government, and especially to the party in power. But also the other reason is that in some areas, basically because of the low pay, the low facilitation, which is deliberate, you cannot get technical and well-experienced people to take up councillorship, especially in those rural local governments. They run away to get more lucrative engagements, a consultancy or private business, in town – instead of being in a council where they are paid 10 thousand [Shillings; around GBP 3]

[341] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 76, 20 May 2016.

> allowances... So you maintain the mediocre, you can easily manage them, and give them peanuts.

A number of interviewees raised concerns with the risk of poor-quality decision-making arising from the low education levels of councillors. Interlocutors argued that councillors with low literacy and numeracy levels were unable to adequately assess the proposals and bills that were put to them for decisions. In addition, councillors' motivations for holding office were called into question, in a reflection of the frustration and tensions that interviewees described in their local areas. For example, an LC5 Speaker describes[342] his fellow councillors:

> Do you know that there is no academic qualifications for anyone to be a councillor at LC5? There isn't. Even if you stopped in nursery. Provided that you are a proper demagogue in your constituency, eh? So long as people know you are around; as long as you can talk. …. So they [Councillors] get these documents, they open them, then in the meetings we go sector by sector. …. Then the Speaker says, Yes, after arguing this cost, we discussed – yet, no one has discussed – but then we go to the vote, you say, those in favour say Hi [yes] to the vote, and those people just know how to say Hi. Someone is saying Hi on something they have not read. Someone is just interested in the remuneration we pay to them at the end of the month.

Councillors interfere in local revenue-raising

In addition to tensions between public servants and councillors caused by the skill levels and performance of councillors, interlocutors at the sub-national level raised concerns relating to councillors' interference in local revenue-raising processes. In the three studied districts, public servants complained that local councillors attempted to improve their popularity and political standing by advising local citizens not to pay taxes and levies. However, councillors then reportedly become angry when revenue-

[342] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 45, 25 April 2016.

raising activities have generated low revenue levels. From the perspective of local public servants, this situation causes frustration, because they are unable to persuade citizens to pay taxation where local politicians have advised them that it is not required. An LC5 Council Speaker complains[343] of this practice amongst his colleagues:

> Say we want to collect revenue from quarrying the rock. Hmm? You find a district councillor comes from the place where that rock is located. He will go and tell his voters, and say, You know what? The district has plans to sell the rock! So that he remains popular and relevant for the next election. Yet he is the same district councillor who wants to be paid. So if we don't tax for acquiring the rock, and you say you are not being paid! There are instances where certain councillors go and even stop people from collecting revenue, because they want their voters to know that they are working for them. Yet they would be working against the voters, really. Because this local revenue would have helped to repair a borehole. This local revenue would have helped to sink a pit latrine. This local revenue would have done something.

Administration and wage costs of districts are high

A final issue raised by interview participants at the sub-national level is the problem of expenditure on service delivery being undermined by the cost of the sub-national unit's own administration. Referring specifically to the unconditional grant from the central government, for which no pre-earmarked purpose has been determined, key interlocutors explained that after addressing the wage[344] bill of district's own staff, insufficient funding remained to support service delivery. This is an especially important issue as the unconditional grant and locally-raised revenue are the only revenue sources over which district governments hold fiscal autonomy. A District CAO explains:[345]

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[343] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 45, 25 April 2016.
[344] The wage bill of a district or sub-county includes only the wages of the public administration officials of the district, such as the District Health Officer. The broader public service (such as teachers and nurses) are employed by their respective central-government Ministries and Service Commissions, and are not included in the wage bill of the district to which they are posted.
[345] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 6, 03 February 2016.

> Now as I talk it could be between 15 and 20 per cent of the budget comes down [is transferred to the districts]. And then from that more than 80 per cent goes on salaries and wages. So service delivery is left with little money. So you can't see the impact. You can't deliver. .... The government, much as it is decentralisation, but according to the money which is being sent to us, for instance, this year my budget is 30 billion.[346] 30 billion Shillings. But you have to look at that... Almost 24 billion is going on salaries and pensions of the staff.

Political interests of elite actors: Manipulation of resource-allocation

Interview participants in the central government articulated viewpoints relating to the political interests that influence the resource-allocation processes. Specifically, participants' viewpoints centred on two main themes. Interlocutors noted that there are political factors that are considered in the process of making resource-allocation decisions. Elected officials argue for resource-allocation decisions that favour their electorate or sub-county, regardless of the outcomes of needs assessments. For example, an Economist at MoFPED describes:[347]

> But basically it is supposed to be a needs assessment, and you carry out all that, see what is feasible, to put a school here, does it make economic sense. But basically it was really politically-driven; you find a minister wants a school in their district, and they say, basically, we need a school in this certain district.

An Assistant Commissioner at MoFPED raises[348] an example from the healthcare sector:

> But of course, sometimes of course some funds are allocated based on political directives. There are times when funds are allocated so that for this area, because of this special interest, we need this funds for handling this kind of intervention. So, in spite of the formula being there, sometimes there are other directives. …. Sometimes there

[346] Approximately GBP 6 million.
[347] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 58, 02 May 2016.
[348] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 60, 04 May 2016.

> may be – there are certain projects like we have rehabilitation of hospitals, eh? …. Technically for us we would say, probably this hospital 'A' should come first, should be rehabilitated first. But there may be a political intervention, where they say No, we should start with hospital 'C', eh? Yet, A is top on our technical assessment, but now, they say No, we start with C. And it may be because of political reasons. So that's why sometimes you find that kind of thing.

At the sub-national level, too, respondents within the public service described their concerns regarding political engagement with the funding-allocation process. For these interlocutors, concerns related to the interference of elected officials in the decision-making of administrative officials. Respondents described the ways in which elected leaders and senior political officials use their positions to divert the allocation of financial resources in ways that are beneficial to themselves. Respondents reported that political leaders seek to ensure that funding allocations are directed towards elected officials' constituencies, or even towards the officials themselves. A District Principal Finance Officer explains:[349]

> So the implication is that we try to suffocate [cut expenditure from] some departments, in order to top up for the council. So that they get their 100 per cent [of their allowances]. …. It is a must. So for now, we have a council which is expiring. And now they are saying, what has been provided for in terms of transport allowance, sitting allowance, all should be paid, before [their term expires]. And you know for them they are waiting at the time of passing the budget. And they are saying, unless you are providing what we are asking for, we are not going to pass the budget. So we try to look around and make sure that their allowances is paid in full.

A Speaker of a District Council adds[350] (speaking of their fellow Councillors) that local officials attempt to distribute public services throughout the geographical space of the district, in order to ensure that their entire patronage network has received a benefit:

[349] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 48, 28 April 2016.
[350] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 45, 25 April 2016.

> There is this program that has come from the central government; there is re-stocking [gifting cattle to households in conflict-affected regions]. …. I have my five members of council who are the bosses: how can [I] make them benefit? You don't have to use their names, but you can give the names of their relatives. Yes. So you give them one, one, one, one – they also take milk! [The councillors] say, can you organise monitoring for my people – quarterly? You organise quarterly monitoring, you pay them 400 thousand each person – it is something! Because, this budget is passed for the technocrats to implement; in the course of implementation, they have something to go back home with [they derive a benefit]!

For key interlocutors in civil society organisations, a principal concern about political engagement in the resource-allocation process is that the PFM system can be used to support patronage networks. As a result, policymaking can be ad hoc and responsive to demands, rather than being based on coherent and consistent policy frameworks. A Principal Economist at the World Bank's Kampala office explains:[351]

> I think, this also may be one of the challenges or gaps in our decentralisation policy, in the sense that politicians tend to go and make policy pronouncements without stopping and first asking the question, What is the financial implication of this policy decision? .... And for me, I think the Uganda decentralisation policy has been hijacked by politicians, or by politics – by political considerations. It is no longer well-aligned to the philosophy or the taking of – the providing of service delivery.

Quality of service delivery is poor

A number of negative comments regarding the quality of service delivery were raised in interviews, regardless of whether they were members of the central government, civil society or a sub-national unit. Elite respondents described the ways

[351] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.

in which public service delivery was continually of poor quality, including in core services such as healthcare and education. From the central government, respondents described the flaws in public service delivery they have observed. Staff in sectoral ministries, and MoFPED economists engaged in the funding of service-delivery portfolios, were particularly critical. For example, a Senior Economist at MoFPED explains:[352]

> Even after so many years, you don't see improvement. We realise, we don't see any kind of improvement in the service delivery parameters. There are areas where we definitely have made progress. We have made progress in increasing enrolment in schools, in the areas which, much as we talk about there, we have failed to effect improvement.

A Senior Economist at MoES adds:[353]

> We will find that a teacher in a government school is paid, but they are teaching students, pupils, who have no classroom. Who have no – nothing to eat. Who have to walk five miles, you know? to attend. Or who have no materials for class. So even instructional materials need to be there, to be better funded.

From the perspective of interview participants at the sub-national level, the quality of service delivery is poor in many sectors, and monitoring systems are failing to generate improvements. A District RDC noted[354] that some schools have more than 100 children in one classroom, with a single teacher. A District Education Officer described[355] the lack of basic equipment, such as desks, at local schools:

> And when it comes to desks, all the schools are needy, because over 50 per cent of the children are sitting on the floor.

[352] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 25. 05 April 2016.
[353] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 65. 06 May 2016.
[354] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 35. 21 April 2016.
[355] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 7, 04 February 2016.

Finally, a District Health Officer describes[356] situations in which a patient in the healthcare system is unable to afford the treatment that has been recommended to them, and so is forced to compromise on their treatment:

> In most cases, somebody will – in an attempt to avoid those costs – will say, just give me enough [treatment] for my money. So they treat according to the size of their money, not necessarily according to the magnitude of the disease they are suffering from.

District proliferation: Official explanations and political realities

The topic of the rapid proliferation of new districts in Uganda was frequently raised by elite interview participants, across each level of government and administration that participated in the research. Participants expressed strongly-held opinions on this topic, and suggested that there are strong motivations from multiple actors driving the creation of new districts. Participants pointed to two main rationales for creating additional districts: that new districts are created where existing districts are large, or have a large population; and districts are created for politically-motivated reasons. Key informants also drew a link between the push for new districts' creation, and tribal heterogeneity and tensions amongst tribes. These issues are here discussed in turn.

District creation based on population and land size

Regarding the rationales for the creation of additional districts that are stated by elected officials, key informants explained that new districts are created to respond to population pressures. That is, where the population or land area of a particular district is thought to be too large for residents to be able to access public services, the district is divided into smaller districts. It is noteworthy that this is the same rationale as for decentralisation itself: that is, that the creation of districts brings service delivery nearer to the people. This indicates that there is not a specific rationale for creating an additional district, compared to the rationale for decentralisation itself: in both cases,

[356] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 52. 28 April 2016.

improved access to service delivery is the principal explanation. It is also important to note that there is not a recommended or benchmarked size for the population or land area of a district; a district is deemed to be 'too large' by its residents or by its leaders without reference to a standard.

An LC3 Chair at the sub-county level explains[357] that his sub-county has recently been created; it was previously a parish, and was 'elevated' to the status of a sub-county. This was because the parish had become, in his words, too large. The leaders of the parish requested an elevation from their district and from MoLG. He reports that they received no resistance to their request. A Senior Economist from MoFPED explains[358] his perspective on district creation:

> The main reason [for the creation of a new district) is to make sure that services are brought nearer to the population. OK? The thinking is, if I have a district in my own locality, OK, then, issues to do with the transport network, issues to do with the health facilities and services, the education services, will be looked at more closely.

A District CAO describes[359] his viewpoint on district creation, describing the way in which a smaller district yields the opportunity to provide better-monitored services:

> For me here, I have 242 primary schools. Over 30 health facilities. About 17 secondary schools. And so on. So managing those ones is not easy. But you find in another districts has 60, 80 primary schools. So then you are able to reach all of them.

From civil society, a Principal Economist in the World Bank's Kampala office describes[360] the link between popular demands for a district and the acquiescence of political leaders:

> People say, Oh this district has too many [people], so the politicians say, Do you want a district, and they say, Yes we want a district. But they do not appreciate that a district is not just a name.

[357] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 41. 22 April 2016.
[358] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 11. 05 February 2016.
[359] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 47. 27 April 2016.
[360] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.

The political drivers of district creation: Beyond the façade?

Secondly, interview participants described the politically-motivated drives of the creation of additional districts. To these expert informants, the creation of a new district based on land area or population size is a façade, and the more genuine rationale for district creation comes from the political sphere. The DEO and Assistant DEO of a district explain[361] that districts are granted to communities by political leaders who are seeking re-election:

> DEO: It is political. It is political. Simple.
>
> Assistant DEO: That is why when you move to communities they tell you – for us to get more, we need a district. So if you want to go back to power you have to give.
>
> DEO: Give us a district. And you know, the local community does not know the dynamics involved in running a district. They don't know. For them they think that if you have a district then you are a very big people, big community, or something like this. It is not true.

A professor at Makerere University argues[362] that political leaders agree to the creation of additional districts because this allows them to reward allies, and to increase the dominance of NRM in Parliament:

> The only reason, and the only logical explanation for the creation of new districts in Uganda is political expediency. Basically, gathering more support, for rallying more support, for the ruling government, for the party in power. And that's all. Because any new district means that you are going to get, one, there's the few elites to be employed. OK? And then [secondly] you are also going to get more cadres for the NRM government, and that is a fact – because most of them are created in those areas where the current government has support. … they go to the rural areas, that's where the current NRM party has a lot of support – that's where they split the districts.

[361] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 51. 28 April 2016.
[362] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 76. 20 May 2016.

A Senior Economist in the World Bank's Kampala office argues[363] that the creation of additional districts serves to make districts smaller, and so reduces their power and scale relative to their local MP:

> When Uganda had, like, 69 districts, most of these districts were very big. …. So a district chairman who was elected through universal adult suffrage would be controlling 4 or 5 parliamentary constituencies. And, he or she would have a large revenue base, and a large population he is managing. And politically, he was very powerful, compared to a national member of parliament who legislates. OK? Now. I think … this in a way ruffled the feathers of people in the central government. …. The central government could not give directives to districts, because the districts were large, the districts had the financial muscles, to finance a substantial percentage of its budget. …. So for me, one of the views I am putting forward is that parliament deliberately went for the proliferation of districts to undermine the political and financial strength of hitherto big districts. Now, we have reached a situation where these districts are too small, financially not viable, highly dependent on central-government transfers, the district chairman cannot stand or pose a question of either directives from the central government ministries or from a member of parliament.

District proliferation linked to tribal differences

A final point relating to district proliferation that was raised by key informants at each of the studied levels of government is the connection between district proliferation, and tribal identities. Interviewed experts raised examples of situations in which a community has successfully lobbied for the creation of an additional district or sub-county in their local area, using the basis of their tribal identity. As a result of the cultural and linguistic heterogeneity within Uganda, and of the historical context of the formation of districts during the colonial period,[364] there are several examples of

[363] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.
[364] As discussed in section 1.2.

districts that contain more than one tribal group within its borders. Where one tribal group dominates the local government, this can cause members of the other group to feel that their needs are not being adequately addressed. Regardless of the accuracy of this claim, it can be used as the basis for arguing for the creation of a new district, so that the under-represented tribal group can become a tribal majority in the new district.

A common argument is that language barriers between tribal groups necessitate the creation of separate districts, so that council members will share a common language (other than English). A Director at the LGFC explains:[365]

> They say, Now, we don't speak the same language with those people. Because, since there is no education requirement to be a councillor, when some councils convene they speak in the local language. So they don't speak in English. It is only the clerk to council who will keep the minutes in English. …. In the district, if it is a big one, you may find that those who manage the district may not be the more powerful maybe from somewhere, in one corner of the district. So one part of the district may feel marginalised. And that's when they ask for, We want to vote by our feet. They cut off themselves.

An LC3 Chair at the sub-county level also raised[366] the possibility that new districts are created along tribal lines where this conflict between two tribes, as a way of maintaining peace. He describes the context in his own district, and predicted that conflict between two major tribal groups would lead to an additional district being created in the coming years. The notion of districts being created to mitigate conflict between tribal groups is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

[365] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 79. 26 May 2016.
[366] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 41. 22 April 2016.

Section conclusion: Experts' views on decentralisation, participation and district creation

This section has discussed the results of interviews conducted with experts at the central, district, and sub-county level, as well as with leaders from LC1 and LC3 councils. These interviews reveal that decentralisation in the Ugandan context is showing signs of failing to deliver on its two central goals: the responsiveness of sub-national governments to local development needs, and the improved participation of local communities in governance. Key informants describe the ways in which local economic development has become a key policy goal of government, including the provision of public services, in part because this has not already been delivered through the decentralisation system. Respondents describe the political manipulation of the resource allocation decision by central-government elected leaders, and the continued dominance of the central government over sub-national governments in planning and budgeting. The pre-eminence of central-government planning documents, and the predominance of conditionality in transfers to sub-national governments, combine to reduce the responsive capacity of district and sub-county governments to local development priorities. As a result, citizens are becoming disengaged from local planning and budgeting processes, and are turning away from participatory governance mechanisms such as village planning meetings. The value of participation, and the ability of decentralisation to achieve it, are called into question by key informants.

Furthermore, interviewees report that service delivery remains poor-quality, and sub-national governments continue to be hindered by staffing shortages and low capacity. The high administrative costs of sub-national governments, relative to the scale of the funds over which they hold discretionary authority, suggests that the proliferation of new districts risks increasing the transaction costs of service delivery. The following section presents quantitative analysis of data from the national budget process, illustrating the financial aspects of the challenges described by interview participants.

4.2 Results from budget data: Low authority and high conditionality

Quantitative data contributes to an analysis of the issues raised in elite interviews and the household survey in two ways.[367] Firstly, it allows for these issues to be triangulated: the opinions and viewpoints of actors interviewed and surveyed can be compared to the actual outcomes of the budget and other data sources. Secondly, the examination of numerical data can facilitate an analysis of the scale of the issues raised, and a comparison of the scale of these issues over time. For example, where key informants argue that a decreasing share of the budget is being decentralised, this claim can be verified through an analysis of budget figures, and the percentage change over time can be identified. Key issues that can be identified by analysing quantitative data derived from budget sources include trends in budget allocations to sub-national units, the regularity and uniformity of budget allocations to sectors and districts, and any irregularities or discrepancies in financial flows to different regions in Uganda. Budget data also reveals the extent to which sub-national governments are able to generate locally-raised revenue, and their relative expenditures on administrative costs and wage bills within their local areas.

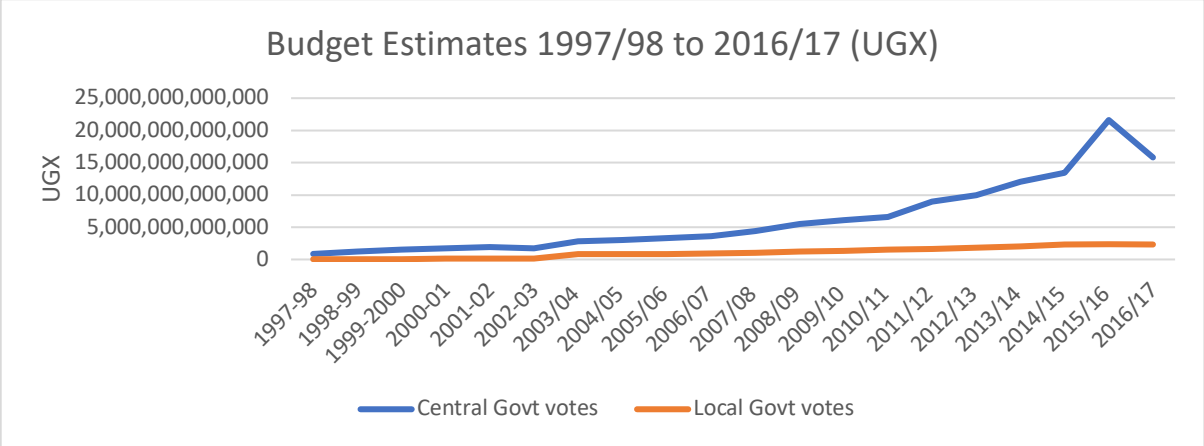
This section presents results gathered from a range of documents that are produced in order to operationalise the national budget in Uganda[368] at both the national and sub-national levels. This data is used to situate the arguments made by research participants within the broader public finance context of Uganda, and to identify trends in fiscal outcomes over time. In particular, trends emerge relating to: the overall balances and priorities expressed in the budget; transfers to districts; districts' ability to raise local revenues; and equalisation attempts between regions in Uganda. This section discusses each of these in turn.

[367] Quantitative data was collated into single databases for each line of inquiry (such as releases or estimates), and then analysed for trends and frequencies. Data is presented in the form of descriptive statistics.

[368] Specifically, from the National Budget Framework Papers, from Medium-Term Expenditure Framework documents, and from the Approved Estimates and Approved Releases for each financial year.

Overall trends in the national budget: Increasing expenditure in centralised sectors

Examining the national budget data highlights a number of trends that reveal decision-making outcomes in public financial management. Trade-offs are made transparent where they have been made between expenditures in public service sectors compared to administrative sectors, and between different regional areas. As depicted in graph 4.1 below, the overall budget[369] has demonstrated an upward trend since 1997/98, in both local government votes and central government votes. Central government votes, in particular, have increased substantially, with some fluctuation around 2015/16. Local government votes' budgets have increased, but not to as great an extent as central government votes.

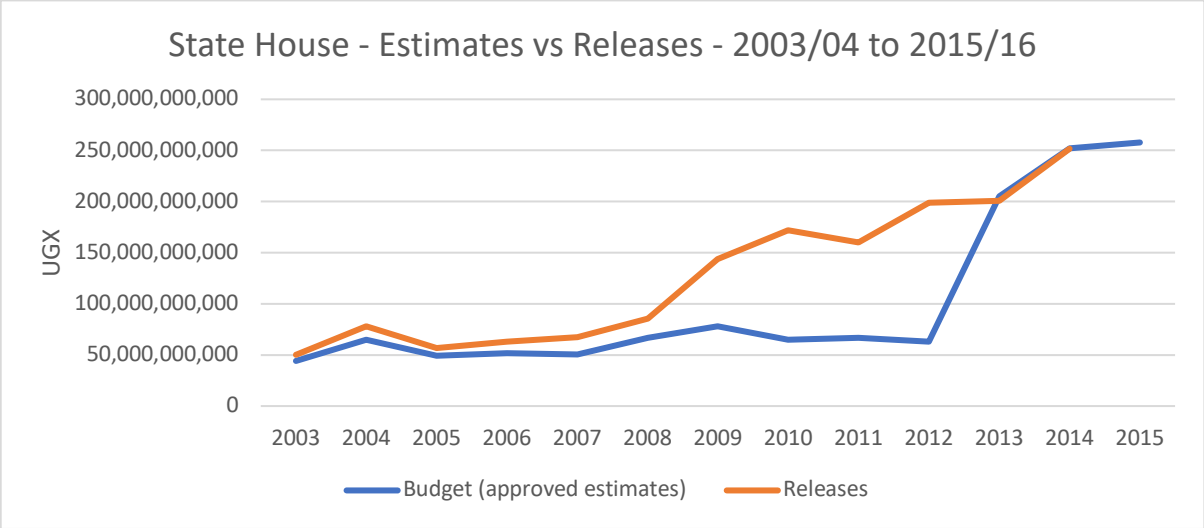


4.1 Approved budget estimates for central government and local government votes 1997/98 to 2016/17

While the budgets of central-government ministries overall has been increasing, there has been some variation from one sectoral ministry to the next. Comparing trends in budgets (approved estimates) of key sectoral ministries between 2003/04 and 2015/16 reveals that some areas of government expenditure have received substantial increases in funding over time. In other cases, while the overall budgets have not increased or decreased substantially, the value of estimates and releases has been similar, allowing agencies to undertake successful project management during the course of a financial year. For example, the budget of State House has increased over this time period. Between 2013/13 and 2015/15, the budget

[369] Source: National Budget Framework Papers, annual. Graph author's own.

of State House rose from UGX 63 billion to UGX 258 billion, a percentage increase of 308 per cent. In addition to this overall increase in the approved estimates, it is striking to note that the approved estimates have risen to better reflect releases; that is, releases had been higher than estimates, and estimates rose to meet them. This indicates that for a number of years, the funding received[370] by State House over the course of a financial year in fact exceeded what had been committed to it at the beginning of the financial year. These trends are illustrated in graph 4.2 below.

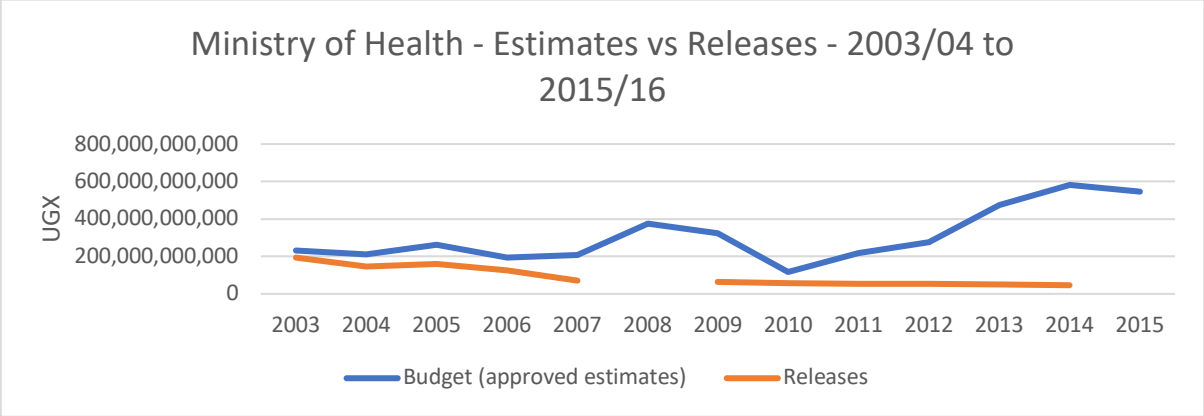


4.2 The budget (approved estimates) issued at the beginning of each financial year, compared to the 'actual' funding (releases) issued throughout the same year, for State House, 2003/04 to 2015/16

In contrast, the budget (approved estimates) for the Ministry of Health over this same time period has fluctuated, and releases (the 'actual' level of funding) have failed to match the estimates that were announced at the beginning of each financial year. This is illustrated below in graph 4.3.[371] The fluctuations in approved estimates over time presents challenges for the Ministry's long-term economic planning, as senior officials and economists in the Ministry are unable to obtain forward estimates of their sector's funding, upon which to base medium-term planning. In addition, the low levels of releases compared to estimates is challenging for meeting contracted project commitments within one financial year. This is because financial commitments that

[370] Source: National Budget Framework Papers, annual. Graph author's own.
[371] Releases figures were not available for the financial year 2008/09.

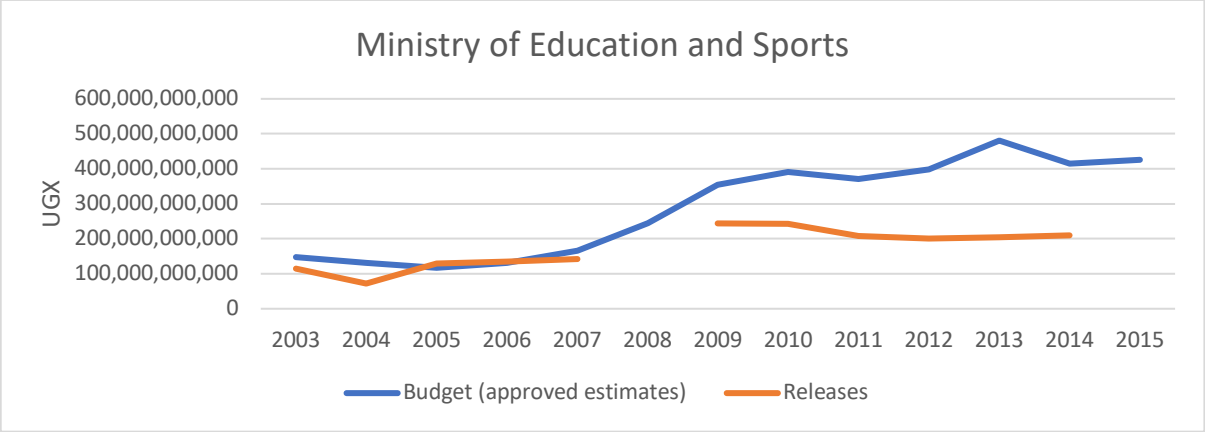
were put in place at the beginning of the financial year (such as contracts with suppliers and construction agents) may not be adequately financed over the course of the financial year.



4.3 Approved estimates compared to releases for the Ministry of Health, 2003/04 to 2015/16

Likewise, a comparison of approved estimates compared to releases for the Ministry of Education and Sports over this same time period reveals that while the approved estimates for the sector increase over time, and releases for each financial year fall well below the approved estimates. Graph 4.4 illustrates the Ministry's estimates and releases.[372] [373]

[372] Source: National Budget Framework Papers, annual. Graph author's own.
[373] Releases figures were not available for the financial year 2008/09.



4.4 Approved estimates compared to releases for the Ministry of Education and Sports, 2003/04 to 2015/16

Transfers to districts: Variation, fluctuations, and falling over time

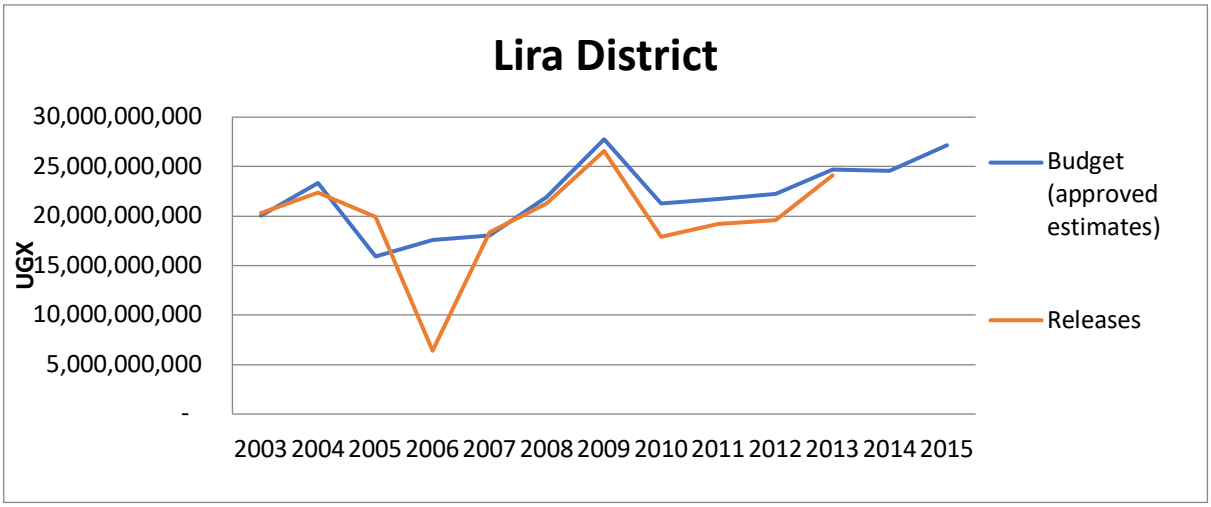
Four principal areas of importance are examined in this sub-section. Firstly, the extent to which district governments receive predictable transfers based on budget estimates is examined. Secondly, results are presented illustrating the balance between conditional and unconditional grants that are received by districts from the central government, which speaks to the level of discretionary authority districts hold over the finances they receive. Thirdly, results are presented illustrating the percentage of the budget that is decentralised, and therefore transferred to districts, over time. Finally, the extent to which district governments expend unconditional budgets on wages and allowances for staff, compared to other expenditures, will be examined.

Estimates versus releases: Budget changes within a financial year

Firstly, results from the budget indicate the extent to which the actual transfers to districts per financial quarter ('releases') are an accurate reflection of the commitments that were made to each district in the annual budget documents ('estimates'). Estimates are approved by Parliament at the outset of each financial year, and releases ought to be the same amount (divided over four financial quarters). The significance of this data is that it illustrates the extent to which district governments

are able to rely on the estimates that are presented at the beginning of the financial year, as they go forward with projects and activities during the year. If the releases and estimates are close to one another throughout the year – if the funding promised to districts is close to what they then receive – this facilitates smooth financial management and project delivery by districts. However, if there are large discrepancies between the releases and estimates (particularly if releases fall below estimates), district governments may find that they are unable to meet their financial commitments to contractors and suppliers at the conclusion of the financial year. This can jeopardise the successful completion of public services such as schools and healthcare posts.

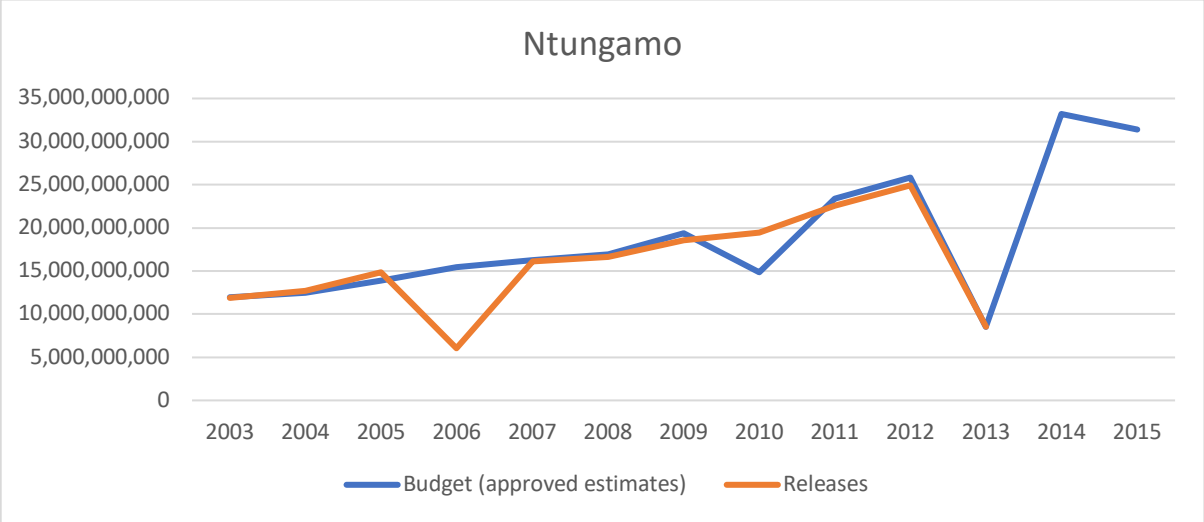
The results from budget data collected during fieldwork indicate that district governments are challenged by differences between the budget estimates that are approved by parliament at the beginning of the financial year, and the transfers they in fact receive. An analysis of the estimates and releases received by the three districts that were the focus of this thesis is illustrative of the challenges that can be caused by differences between these two figures. For example, the case of Lira is depicted in graph 4.5 below, showing the comparison of estimates and releases received[374] by the District between 2003/04 and 2015/16.



4.5 Releases compared to estimates for Lira District, 2003/04 to 2015/16.

[374] Source: National Budget Framework Papers (Local Government Votes), annual. Graph author's own.

Graphs illustrating the releases and estimates[375] for Ntungamo District depict similar levels of instability, as shown by graph 4.6:

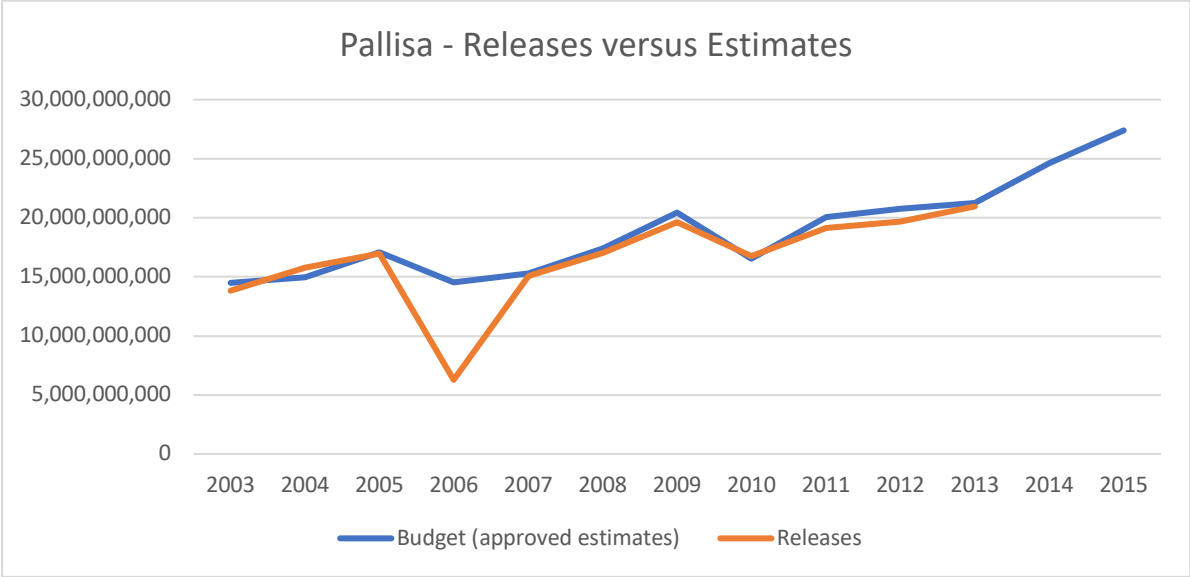


4.6 Approved estimates compared to releases, Ntungamo District, 2003/04 to 2015/16

In Ntungamo District, in addition to the instability in estimates across financial years, it can be observed that in some financial years releases exceeded estimates, while in other financial years the opposite was the case. While receiving greater funding than was advised at the beginning of the financial year may be preferable to receiving less funding than advised, it is nonetheless the case that unpredictable releases compared to estimates is challenging for project management by district governments.

On the other hand, in Pallisa District, other than in 2006, estimates and releases have been closely connected, as illustrated in graph 4.7 below.

[375] Source: National Budget Framework Papers (Local Government Votes), annual. Graph author's own.



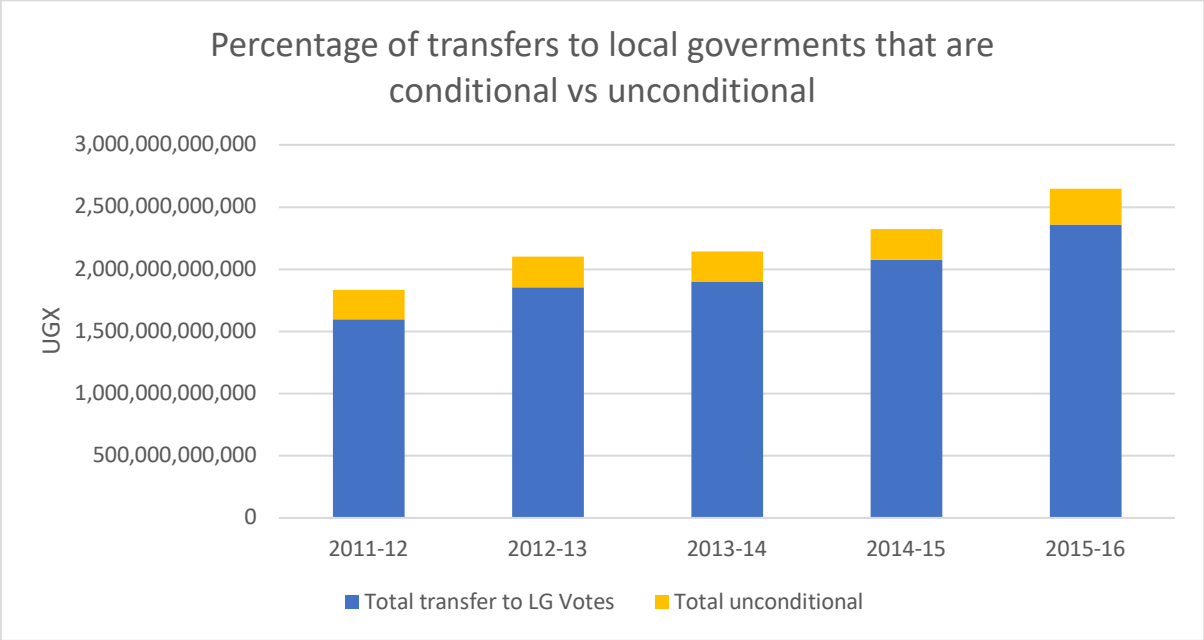
4.7 Releases compared to estimates, Pallisa District, 2003/04 to 2015/16

Conditional versus unconditional grants: High levels of central-government control

Secondly, in addition to facing discrepancies between releases and estimates, and variance in the estimates themselves, districts must also manage a balance between conditional and unconditional funds in the transfers they receive from the central government. An analysis of the quantitative data collected during fieldwork reveals the balance between conditional and unconditional grants that are transferred to sub-national governments. Where the majority of the transfers that are sent from the central government to the district government are conditional, that indicates that the central government's sectoral ministries have pre-determined the activities on which transferred funds can be spent. This affects the ability of local governments to be responsive to locally-raised development priorities, and instead reduces their role to that of implementing the priorities and programs of the central government. Conversely, where a large proportion of the transfer to district governments is unconditional, districts are entitled to utilise this funding on any program or activity they deem to be important for addressing local development needs.

Analysing the Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks for the financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16 reveals that the average size of the unconditional grant

transferred[376] to all districts was 13 per cent of the total transfer of funds. This data is summarised in graph 4.8 below.



4.8 Percentage of the total transfer to district governments that is conditional funding (blue) compared to unconditional funding (yellow), 2011/12-2015/16

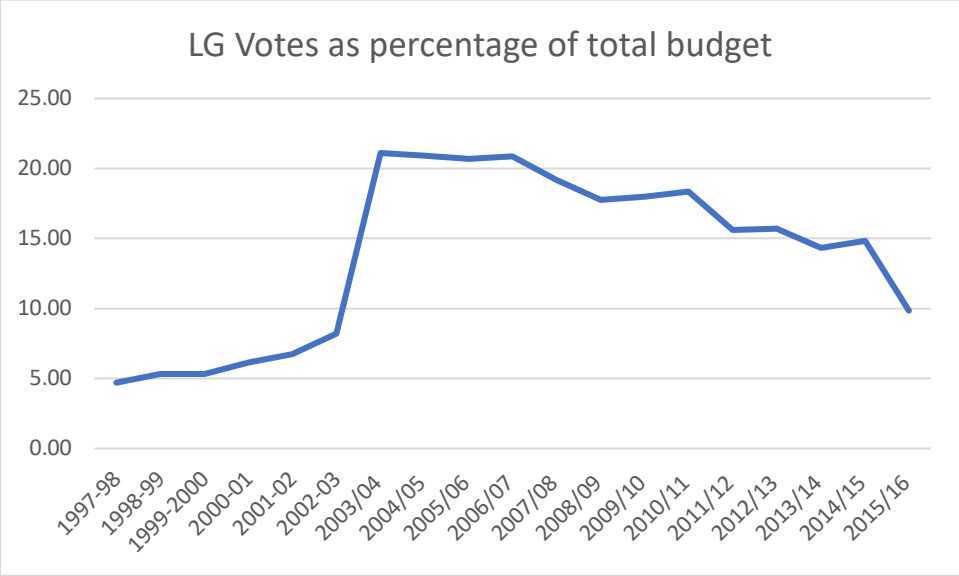
Percentage of the national budget that is transferred to districts: Falling over time

Thirdly relating to district-government financing, budget data[377] reveals trends in the percentage of the budget that is transferred to decentralised governments. Where this percentage is high, it indicates a high level of expenditure on public services such as healthcare and education (as these are decentralised sectors) compared to energy, defence, highways, and other sectors that remain centralised. A high percentage of funds that are transferred to sub-national governments would also indicate a strong preference from the central government that local governments should be responsible for delivering public services, rather than having the relevant central-government sectoral ministries maintaining control over the delivery of these services. Where the percentage of the budget that is transferred to sub-national governments is low, it suggests that either the central sectoral ministries have

[376] Source: Medium-Term Expenditure Framework; annual. Graph author's own.
[377] Source: National Budget Framework Papers (Central Government Votes), annual. Graph author's own.

maintained control over the delivery of decentralised services, or the government's focus is on non-decentralised spending areas, or a combination of each of these.

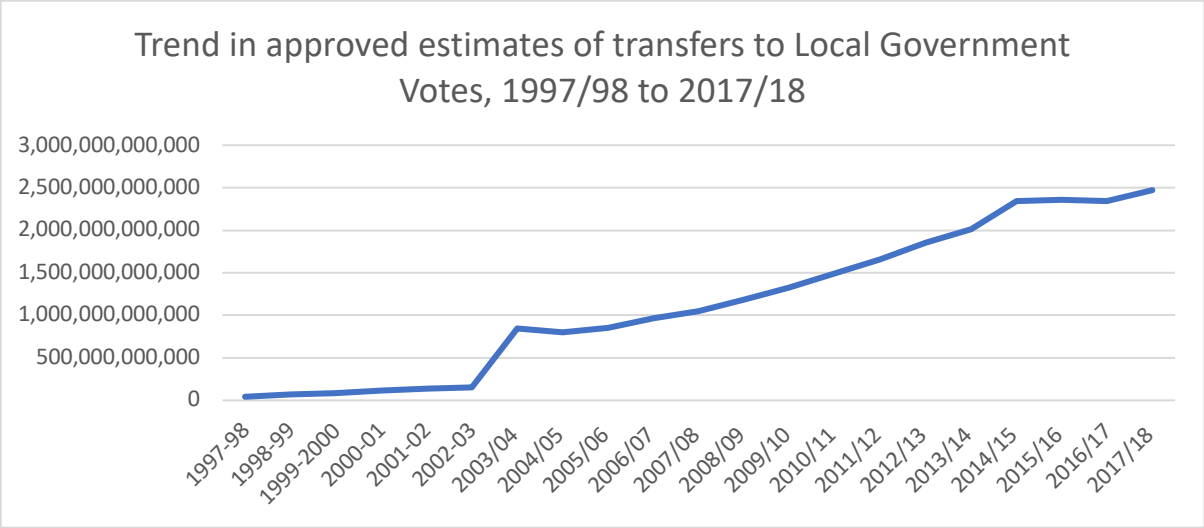
The results from the National Budget Framework Paper reveal that the transfer of resources from the central government's annual national budget to district and lower local governments has fallen to 9.85 per cent of the national budget in 2015/16. Its peak was 20.93 per cent in 2003/4, immediately prior to the commencement of multi-party elections in 2006. This result is depicted in graph 4.9 below.



4.9 The percentage of the overall annual national budget that is decentralised (is transferred to district governments), 1997/98 to 2015/16

Overall, while the annual transfers[378] to local government votes rose in absolute terms over the course of 1997/98 to 201/18 (as illustrated in graph 4.10 below), the percentage of the national budget that these transfers represent has fallen from its peak of 21 per cent in 2003/04.

[378] Source: National Budget Framework Papers (Central Government Votes), annual. Graph author's own.



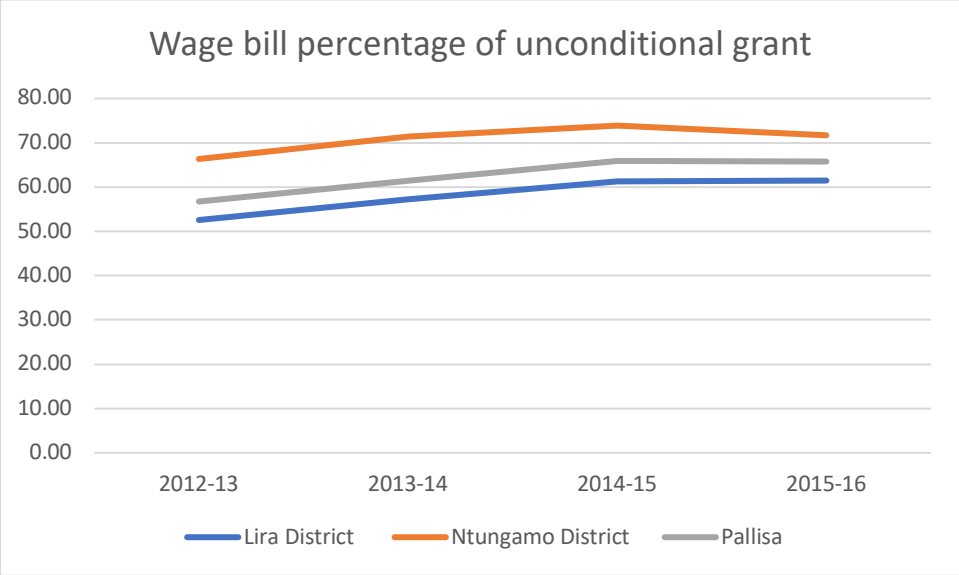
4.10 Transfers to local government votes in shilling terms, 1997/98 to 2017/18

Expenditure on the wage bill crowds out expenditure on public services

Finally relating to financing of districts, analysing budget data from the districts' own annual budgets[379] allows for an analysis of the extent to which the wage costs[380] of the district itself absorb the unconditional grant. The unconditional grant is the pool of funds from which district governments must meet their administration costs, including equipment, offices and other recurrent expenditures. For the three studied districts, expenditure on wages for the district's public-administration officials and the allowances paid to councillors absorbs a substantial fraction of the overall unconditional grant. In Pallisa, the wage bill absorbs an average of 62 per cent of the district's unconditional grant over the financial years 2012/13 to 2015/16. Over the same time period in Lira, the wage bill absorbs an average of 58 per cent of the annual unconditional grant. In Ntungamo, expenditure on the wage bill over the same time period absorbs 71 per cent on average of the annual unconditional budget. The high proportion of wage to non-wage expenditure in the unconditional grant in these three districts indicates that the cost of payments of salaries for staff represents a substantial proportion of the overall unconditional grant. This has the effect of reducing the amount

[379] Source: Local Government Budget Framework Paper (LGBFP) produced annually by each district and approved by a specific sitting of the district (LC5) council. Graph author's own.
[380] The wages that are the responsibility of district governments are for the administrative staff of the district itself, such as the District Education Officer (though not the CAO, who is an employee of MoPS). The wages of other civil servants, such as teachers, remain the responsibility of the relevant sectoral ministry in the central government, and are not included in these wage figures.

of funding that is available for district governments to respond to the development needs of the community. This situation as it affects the three studied districts of this thesis is illustrated in graph 4.11 below.



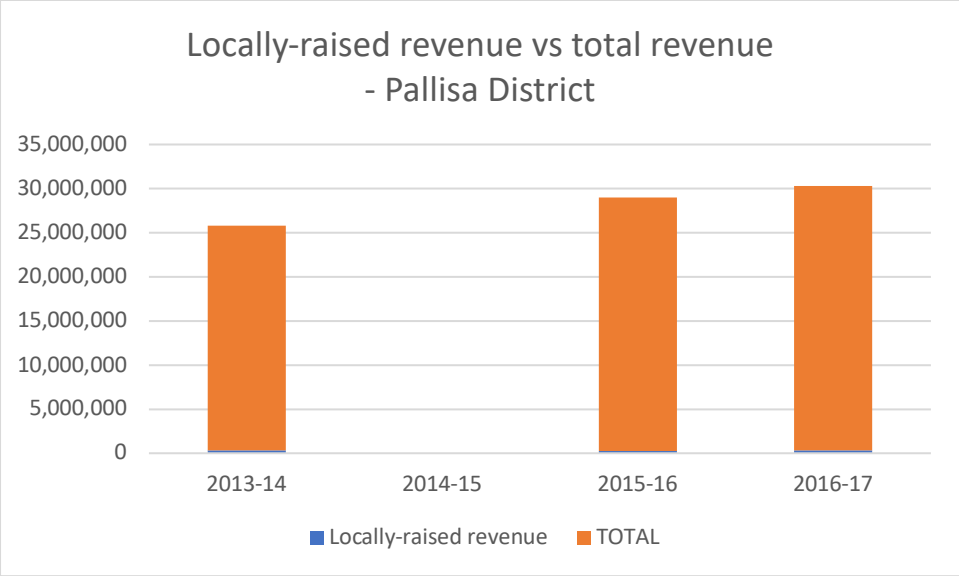
4.11 Percentage of the unconditional grant that is earmarked for the wage bill, in three studied districts

Locally-raised revenue: A small percentage of district and sub-county budgets

An analysis of quantitative data from the national budget reveals the extent to which district governments are able to generate locally-raised revenue. As discussed in section 4.1, while district governments have been granted the authority to charge levies, dues and taxes under the terms of the *Local Government Act 1997*, their ability to enact this authority is limited. These limitations are caused by a low viable tax base at the sub-national level (particularly where most residents of a district are engaged in subsistence farming), low rates of tax compliance, and a lack of records of taxpayers to determine which citizens may have failed to pay tax. An analysis of the locally-raised revenue[381] in the three districts studied for this thesis supports the arguments made by district-government officials, in that they are able to generate only small amounts of local revenue. For Pallisa District, local revenue between 2013/14 and 2016/17 contributed an average of 1.09 per cent to the overall revenue of the district, as

[381] Source: LGBFPs of the three studied districts, annual. Graph author's own.

illustrated in graph 4.12 below. In Lira over the same time period, locally-raised revenue comprised an average of 0.92 per cent of the overall annual revenue for the district. In Ntungamo District, data was only available for the financial year 2013/14, in which the percentage of annual revenue that was generated by locally raised revenue was 0.88 per cent.



4.12 Locally-raised revenue as a percentage of the overall annual revenue of Pallisa District

Where districts are relatively unable to raise substantial levels of revenue locally, they remain dependent on the central government for transfers of funds. Given that the majority of these transfers are in the form of conditional grants, local governments are hindered in their ability to be responsive to local development priorities in their area.

Inter-regional equalisation: Little evidence of implementation

A common rationale for decentralisation that is described in the literature[382] is that it can be used to target areas of more severe poverty within a country's borders. By being able to direct greater levels of resources to regions that face greater development challenges, central governments can attempt to improve equality

[382] For example, World Bank, 'World Development Report 2000/2001 : Attacking Poverty'.

between regions of a country. In the Ugandan case, equalisation grants are frequently cited by officials at the national level[383] as a mechanism for transferring greater resources to areas of Uganda that have higher levels of headcount poverty. In the Ugandan context, areas that are poorer are the areas in northern Uganda, due to a combination of economic, political and environmental factors, in addition to a lengthy period of insurgency between 1987 and 2006 that caused high levels of population displacement and conflict.

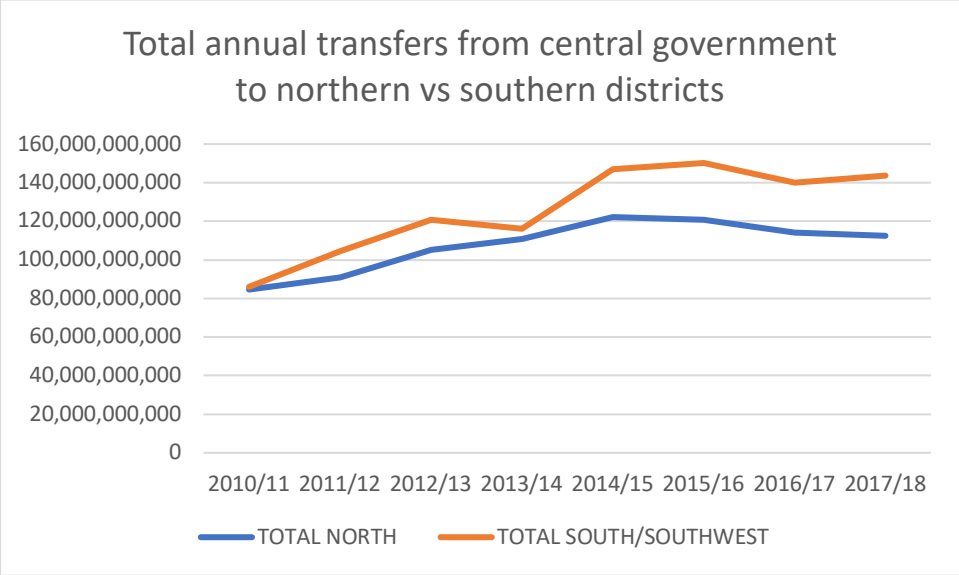
Budget data was therefore examined to assess two potential ways in which decentralisation could be used in the Ugandan context to promote equalisation among regions. Firstly, results were collected on the equalisation grant, and the level of utilisation of this grant for transferring resources to poorer regions (particularly to districts in the north).[384] Secondly, budget data was collected to facilitate analysing the extent to which northern districts receive higher levels of conditional or unconditional funding than southern districts, as a way of generating equalisation through budget transfers themselves.

Regarding the equalisation grant, the budget results collected indicate that the equalisation grant comprises an extremely small percentage of the funds that are transferred to local governments. Across all districts, the equalisation grant represented 0.15 per cent of the transfers from the central government to district governments in the years 2014/15 and 2015/16. As a percentage of the overall national budget in the same years, equalisation grants represented 0.02 per cent of the entire national annual budget.

Secondly, when assessing whether northern districts receive larger transfers of conditional and unconditional grants in recognition of their higher levels of poverty, data from the budget[385] suggested that the opposite is the case. For the budget years 2010/11 to 2017/18, districts in southern Uganda received higher transfers than those

[383] Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda', in Saito, 'Politics and Local Government in Uganda'.
[384] A GoU and multi-donor fund for support specifically for the north, the PRDP, was not considered as its support is largely in the form of infrastructure, and it was not decentralised (projects were managed from Kampala by the Office of the Prime Minister).
[385] Source: National Budget Framework Papers, annual, and MTEFs, annual. Data combination and graph by author.

in northern Uganda, as illustrated in graph 4.13 below. The average level of transfer to southern districts over this time period was UGX126,034,541,914 per year, while the average transfer to northern districts was UGX107,633,628,498 – which represents 85 per cent of the transfers to southern districts.



4.13 Transfers from the central government to all northern districts (average) compared to all southern districts (average)

This finding suggests that generating improved equality between northern and southern districts is not currently being attempted through the regular budget system, which is often cited as a rationale for the implementation of decentralisation.

Section conclusion: Budget results as the fiscal outcomes of decentralisation

The analysis presented in this section of the national budget outcomes over a two-decade period demonstrates the challenges to public financial management that must be managed if decentralisation is to be fully implemented. While the rationales for implementing decentralisation, particularly fiscal decentralisation, require that sub-national governments obtain a degree of financial independence, analysis of the Ugandan budget indicates that this is not the case in practice. From the perspective of district governments, funding flows from the central government are highly variable, both across and within financial years. High levels of conditionality in these transfers is also evident in the data, and a large proportion of districts' expenditure that is earmarked for wages and other recurrent costs is also evident. Finally, the small

proportion of sub-national budgets that is comprised of locally-raised revenue is also revealed, demonstrating the heavy reliance of districts and sub-counties for funding from the central government for their annual expenditures.

When compared to the results of interviews, budget data conveys similar narratives: of highly-dependent districts, constrained by conditional grants, and so lacking the genuine ability to be responsive to local development priorities. As a result, the benefits of decentralisation (such as public services that are targeted to local development priorities) becomes a challenge for local governments to achieve. By including quantitative results from the national budget process and comparing these results to the outcomes of elite interviews, this section indicates that the viewpoints expressed by expert witnesses go beyond simple perceptions. Rather, these perspectives are supported by results derived from the national budget process.

4.3 Contrasting and comparing results from elite interviews and budget data

Interviews were conducted with elite respondents across two binaries: central and sub-national, and elected and administrative officials. Respondents represent several levels of government within the Ugandan public service and government, ranging from the central government to sub-counties, in Kampala and in three districts. Accordingly, where specific viewpoints or arguments were raised repeatedly by individual actors within each group, areas of agreement and disagreement can be identified between these groups.

Areas of agreement centre on the phenomenon of district proliferation. Across the interviewed cohort, actors expressed consistently that they feel that Uganda has too many districts, leading to crowding-out of expenditure on public services compared to the administrative cost of districts. The high administrative costs of sub-national governments suggests that the continued proliferation of new districts increases the transaction costs of service delivery at the sub-national level. Key informants in the studied sub-national locations also consistently argued that the driving forces behind the creation of these new districts emerges from the political economy. Data obtained from the national budget system indicates that the issue of administrative funding crowding out funding for services is a genuine concern, and likely to be worsened by the creation of additional districts. Likewise, the low revenue-raising capacity of sub-national governments is evident in the quantitative results.

There is also widespread agreement on the under-staffing of district governments, with many interviewees mentioning districts in which staffing numbers were below fifty per cent of the full complement of staff. A number of consistent arguments were raised relating to the financing of sub-national governments: interviewees argue that the capacity of districts to raise funds through local revenue-raising is low, and that as a result, districts are reliant on the central government for funding. Interview participants consistently argued that the level of conditionality of transfers from the centre to the districts has the effect of altering the bottom-up consultation system to a top-down implementation system. That is, rather than responding to development priorities that are identified by citizens at the village level,

sub-national governments are restricted to implementing priorities and activities that are formulated at the central level.

Two main areas of disagreement can also be identified across the respective groups of elite interviewees. The first is whether the funding that is transferred to sub-national governments from the centre is sufficient, in the sense of being an adequate level of financing to enable the delivery of high-quality public services. From the perspective of actors at the sub-national level in the three locations studied, the percentage of the budget that is transferred from the central government to district governments is insufficient, low, and falling. Sub-national government representatives argue that too little funding is received in order for high-quality public services to be achieved. This is particularly in light of the rapid creation of new districts, in which budget transfers are divided amongst an increasing number of districts. However, key informants at the central level argued instead that sub-national governments would be able to achieve a higher standard of public services if they were able to improve their capacity, and look for more innovative solutions to this funding shortfall. That is, district government officials in the three studied districts tend to blame low levels of central-government funding for the poor standard of public services at the sub-national level. Conversely, central government interviewees argue that sub-national governments would improve their performance through higher skills and better use of available resources. When combined with the low levels of locally-raised revenue districts have been able to generate, and the continued proliferation of new districts, this point of disagreement between levels of government appears to be intractable.

Secondly, there is disagreement between groups of interviewees regarding the level of consultation that takes place at the sub-national level, throughout the budget process. At the central government level, key informants repeatedly emphasised that the budget includes extensive consultation of household-level villagers, via village meetings conducted by the LC1 Council. The development priorities that are discussed in these meetings are then argued to be channelled upwards through each level of sub-national government, until they are communicated to the central government. This argument was repeated by several key informants at the national level.

However, district and sub-county interviewees in the three studied districts contradicted this viewpoint. In their argument, village meetings are infrequent and poorly-attended, with only a small percentage of village populations attending. In some cases, poor attendance rates are explained by the low education levels of villagers in rural areas, who subsequently do not feel entitled or able to attend a planning meeting. Furthermore, interview participants at the sub-national level argued that the priorities that are identified by communities themselves are rarely addressed, leading to frustration and disengagement amongst citizens. The disagreement over whether villagers participate in village planning meetings relates directly to the core goals of decentralisation: creating public services that are responsive to local development needs, and participatory, inclusive governance. While the interview responses given by central-level elites suggest that decentralisation is successfully delivering bottom-up, participatory planning, the responses of sub-national actors potentially call this viewpoint into question.

4.4 Chapter conclusion: Questioning the implementation of decentralisation

Results from interviews with elite actors at different levels of government, as well as data collected from the national budget outcomes, allow for an analysis of the way in which decentralisation is being implemented in the Ugandan context. In particular, these results suggest that there are questions to be asked about the extent to which decentralisation is achieving its policy goals in Uganda. Specifically, the improved responsiveness of service delivery to local development needs, and the improved participation of communities in governance and decision-making may not be being achieved. Interview participants, particularly at the sub-national level, argue that districts are faced with conditional funding, low revenue-raising capacity and low staffing levels, contributing to the ongoing dominance of the central government in planning and budgeting. In other words, district governments may not be realising the fiscal and policy independence that is necessary for the goals of decentralisation to be achieved. The emergence of new institutional solutions to the problem of transferring resources to the grassroot – such as Operation Wealth Creation and programs aimed at local economic development – suggest that the failure of decentralisation to achieve sub-national service-delivery improvements is tacitly acknowledged.

The following chapter explores the viewpoints of non-elite actors in greater detail, by adding the perspectives of individuals at the household level.

Chapter Five:

Perspectives from the grassroot:
Demand for new districts, service delivery and access to resources

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> There are many problems of people at the grassroot and no one helps them: poor roads, schools, no water, hospitals. No one addresses their concerns. Government is only helping a few people.
>
> *- Household survey participant, Lira District*

The existing literature on the rationales of decentralisation describe outcomes that are expected to be generated at the village level, such as improved government consultation, participation and responsiveness. In addition, as discussed in Chapter Two, a substantial majority of the literature relating to decentralisation in Uganda focuses on the experiences of elite actors, such as district- and central-level elected officials. The inclusion of a household survey in this thesis sought to explore the experiences of citizens at the village level in Uganda, to ascertain their experiences in relation to these outcomes. In particular, the survey sought to examine two factors. Firstly, the survey investigates the extent and types of participation that takes place between household members and elected representatives in the six studied sites. Secondly, the survey examines the extent to which villagers in these sites feel that they are able to hold local government officials to account for high-standard service delivery, and in turn, how responsive local governments are to local demands.

Results from the household survey are disaggregated according to the six field sites in which they were collected. As described in Chapter Three, the six field sites of the household survey (two villages in each of in three districts), were selected in order to represent the three major rural regions of Uganda (East, North and West). These regions each have different levels of development and political interconnectedness, arising from their differences of geography, tribal composition, economies and

histories. This chapter describes these differences in detail, and expands on how these differences might be expected to affect the outcomes and results of the household survey. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the survey results per site, and discusses whether the results of the household survey accord with the expectations of how results from each site might differ from one another. Where the results of the household survey indicate different outcomes from one location to another, reference is made to the differences in the political economies of different regions in Uganda, and how these differences may be reflected in the results of the survey.

As described in Chapter Three, the six studied sites were as follows:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Name of village	Kachocha	Ogulia	Chanpeciki	Akwachkoli	Mushasha	Katooma
Parish	Petete	Opwatete	Akano	Abongorwot	Katojo	Kiyaga
Sub-county	Petete	Opwatete	Ogur	Amach-Agila	Ruhaama	Nyabihoko
District	Pallisa	Pallisa	Lira	Lira	Ntungamo	Ntungamo
Region	East	East	North	North	West	West

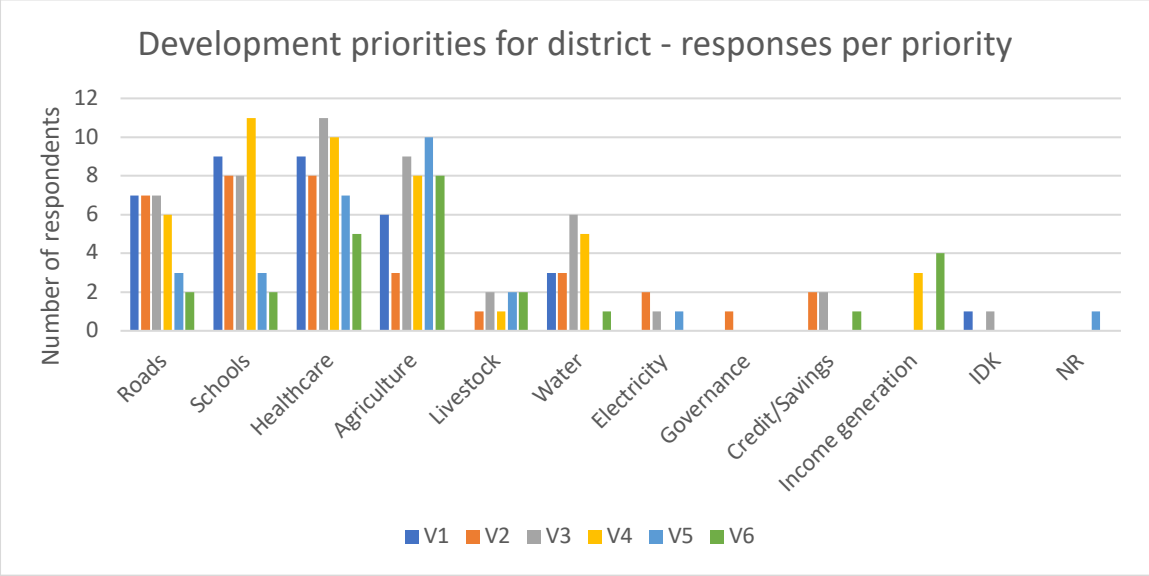
The survey results revealed several key lines of argument that illustrate the perspective of those who live at the grassroot. Arguments that were raised consistently by respondents include: the poor quality of public services in their villages; the lack of adequate responses to complaints made about those same services; and the tendency of election candidates to promise to bring key services to the village, but without in fact generating positive change.

Results suggest that basic public services may not be being adequately provided in the studied villages. For example, in response to the question *What do you think are the most important development priorities for this village?*, respondents nominated basic services, such as healthcare, education, water services, agricultural

extension services, and roads. These results are summarised in images 5.1 to 5.3 below.

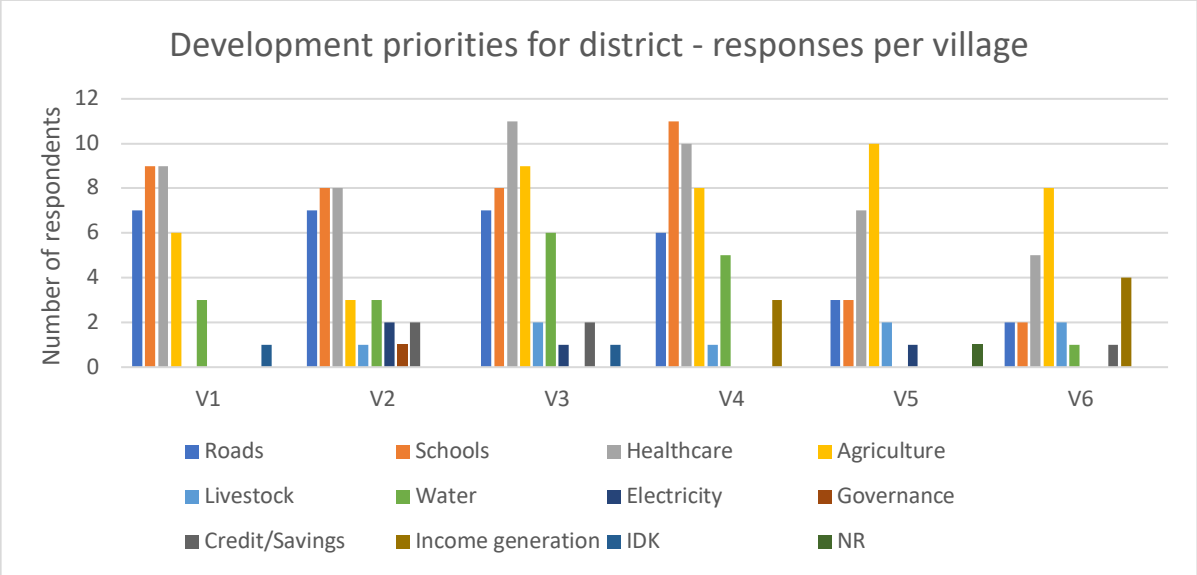
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Roads	7	9	7	6	3	2
Schools	10	11	6	11	3	2
Healthcare	9	10	10	10	7	5
Agriculture	5	4	9	7	9	8
Livestock	1	1	2	1	2	2
Water	3	6	4	5	0	1
Electricity	0	1	1	0	1	0
Governance	0	1	0	0	0	0
Credit/Savings	0	1	0	0	0	1
Income generation	0	1	2	2	0	4
IDK[386]	1	0	1	0	1	0

5.1 Development priorities for the district, as nominated by villagers in each studied site



5.2 Development priorities for the district, as nominated by villagers in each studied site

[386] 'IDK' denotes 'I don't know'. For each question in the household survey, participants were given the option to answer 'I don't know' or 'I don't want to answer', if that was their preference. For some questions, no response was recorded; this is denoted using 'NR'.



5.3 Development priorities per studied site

In response to this question (*What do you think are the most important development priorities for this village?*), respondents in Pallisa and Lira Districts reported that their greatest development priorities for their districts related to public services and amenities, in particular roads, water supply, schools and healthcare, with at least half of the respondents in each district nominating these as priorities. In contrast, respondents in the two villages in Ntungamo District were less likely to nominate these as priorities. For respondents in Ntungamo, the development of agriculture is the most important development priority for their district, with half of the respondents in each village in Ntungamo nominating this as a priority. Income-generating activities were also nominated as a priority by respondents in Village 6 in Ntungamo District, where there was visible evidence of commercially-oriented crops being grown (such as coffee), suggesting that some residents of this village have been able to move beyond subsistence agriculture and into more commercially-oriented farming. These findings accord with the comparative levels of development in these locations, with Ntungamo located within Uganda's better-developed and more-prosperous western region, while Pallisa and Lira are located in the less-developed eastern and northern regions. These differences and their possible effects on survey participants' responses is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Questions asked in the household survey were a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions.[387] The survey questions used in conducting the household survey is presented at Appendix B, and the complete disaggregated results of the survey is at Attachment D. This Chapter Five presents a summary of the results of the household survey, arranged according to key topics that were discussed. Section 5.1 contextualises the survey, and analyses the developmental differences between the studied sites, analysing how these differences might be expected to influence participants' responses. Section 5.2 presents results relating to questions of village-level consultation, participation and government responsiveness. Section 5.3 presents results from survey questions relating to village-level perceptions of the quality of service delivery in their local area. Section 5.4 presents survey responses relating to participants' strategies to gain access to services, where state-provided systems have not generated adequate provision. In Section 5.5, results are presented to questions relating to ethnic and tribal identities, and the perceived implications of these for accessing services and employment opportunities. A summary of opinions relating to the creation of additional sub-county units, viewed from the perspectives of villagers who participated in the survey, is discussed at section 5.7, while Section 5.8 compares the survey responses of participants in different studied sites, and analyses to what extent these differences might be explained by regional differences amongst the studied sites. Section 5.9 draws theoretical conclusions.

[387] The household survey was conducted in April 2016, in the period immediately following the Presidential, parliamentary and sub-national council elections of that year. At the time of the survey, the successful candidates had not yet been sworn in to commence their new term of office, so comments made by survey respondents are to be taken to refer to elected officials of the previous parliamentary term (2011-16).

5.1 Contextualising the study: Uganda's regions and the six studied sites

This section will describe some of the differences between the regions of Uganda, including arguments put forward in the existing literature, and will describe how these differences might be expect to affect the outcomes of the household survey. The regions of Uganda each face a unique set of development opportunities and challenges. These are generated by both endogenous factors such as geographical factors, and exogenous factors such as differences in the extent of government intervention and contact in different regions. In terms of climate, the Northern region of Uganda has a more arid climate than other regions of Uganda, generating different agricultural outcomes from other regions. The North has also been subjected to different labour practices from the rest of the country, and has received different treatment by governments, both during the colonial era and since independence.[388] The North receives a smaller share of public expenditure relative to other regions, and has a greater level of support and engagement from NGOs and other international actors.[389] Analysis by Boone[390] tells us that national rulers will adopt different political strategies for different regions, depending on their goals for that region – so even within one country, we see different political strategies in place in different locations: multiple 'political topographies', in Boone's terminology, can be observed. When combined with climactic and geographic factors, these political-strategy differences may generate profoundly different outcomes at the district level. However, at the level of the village (the level at which the household survey was conducted), differences may be more subtle, with the majority of populations engaged in similar livelihoods and facing similar challenges regarding service delivery and local governance. This section sets out these differences of context for the research, and analyses the extent to which these differences might be expected to affect the results of the household survey at the village level.

[388] Lindemann, 'Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda'.
[389] Appleton, 'Regional or National Poverty Lines? The Case of Uganda in the 1990s'.
[390] Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*.

Western Uganda

Western Uganda's hilly terrain, cool climate, regular rainfall patterns and fertile soil have made it a region that is well-suited to agricultural production. The production of commercial agricultural products such as coffee is concentrated in Western Uganda, and this region has also attracted a greater number of tourists than other regions. Western Ugandan households are more likely to be involved in commercial as well as subsistence farming, and so are less likely to live in poverty than households in other Ugandan regions. Indeed, poverty rates in Western Uganda are markedly lower than those in Eastern, and especially Northern, Uganda. Analysis conducted by Appleton[391] highlights the differences in household consumption levels of households in different regions, with households in Western Uganda consuming 25 per cent more on average than households in Northern Uganda throughout the 1990s. Then, in 2012, Ssewanyana and Kasirye[392] found that household consumption in Western Uganda was twice as high as in Northern Uganda. This increase from a 25 per cent household-consumption gap in the 1990s to a 50 per cent gap in 2012 suggests that consumption inequality between the North and the West is worsening over time, rather than improving.

Further analysis from Appleton[393] also suggests that between 1992 and 2000, regions in which household income was higher in 1992 show higher growth rates over time, suggesting that inequality in household incomes is also increasing rather than decreasing. Appleton finds that households in Western Uganda had a 4.5 per cent increase in income levels over this time period, compared to 0.5 per cent (near stagnation) in Northern Uganda. Likewise, Deininger and Okidi find that the poverty reduction rate for Northern Uganda was zero per cent between 1992 and 2000, compared to -22.8 per cent in Western Uganda and -20.9 per cent for Eastern Uganda. As well as reflecting the different economic and agricultural conditions facing households in Northern Uganda, these statistics also reflect the impact of civil conflict in the North, as will be discussed below.

[391] Appleton, 'Regional or National Poverty Lines? The Case of Uganda in the 1990s'.
[392] Ssewanyana and Kasirye, 'Poverty and Inequality Dynamics in Uganda: Insights from the Uganda National Panel Surveys 2005/6 and 2009/10'.
[393] Appleton, 'Regional or National Poverty Lines? The Case of Uganda in the 1990s'.

In addition to the economic factors described in the preceding paragraph, the extent of interaction between national leaders and local elites in Western Uganda has unique attributes relative to the other Ugandan regions. In Western Uganda, from which many senior leaders of the NRM (including Museveni) originate, there is a degree of connectedness between national elites and local elites. This relationship includes both kinship networks and close-family ties between the communities of Western Uganda and national-level leaders. As a result of these patronage-type connections,[394] elites in the Western region have been accommodated by national leaders in accumulating political and economic power. Green argues that "… the formerly broad base of the NRM government has given way to an increasingly obvious bias towards Western Ugandans, evident militarily, politically and economically."[395] This bias is reflected in the greater number of people from Western Uganda who are members of the political and economic elite in Kampala, such as senior members of the Cabinet and of the Army. Analysis by Lindemann[396] suggests that between 1986 and 2008, 40.3 per cent of Cabinet members originated from Western Uganda, compared to 15.4 per cent from Eastern Uganda, and 10.5 per cent from Northern Uganda. Lindemann concludes[397] that Western ethnic groups have benefited from the distribution of state power to a greater extent than ethnicities from other regions since 1995.

The different levels of economic and political power of those who originate from Western Uganda is also reflected in patterns of new-district creation in this region. Unlike other regions, where there have been a large number of small districts created under NRM rule, some districts in Western Uganda remain undivided. The district of study in the western region, Ntungamo District, is an example of this phenomenon. Conversely, districts in Central and Eastern Uganda in particular have been regularly divided into increasingly small districts. Green[398] draws a connection between the creation of new districts in Central Uganda with the political dominance of Westerners:

[394] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[395] Green, 'Ethnicity and the Politics of Land Tenure Reform in Central Uganda'. Page 381.
[396] Lindemann, 'Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda'. Page 396.
[397] Lindemann. Page 395.
[398] Green, 'Ethnicity and the Politics of Land Tenure Reform in Central Uganda'.

Central Uganda has seen a large number of new districts created, in order to reduce the power of Central (Buganda) leaders, or even in an attempt to bring these districts under the control of Western elites.

The 'political topography' model developed by Boone[399] also suggests that districts in Western Uganda are unlikely to be divided into smaller districts, though for a different reason from that suggested by Green. Using Boone's model, it is possible to argue that in a context like Western Uganda, in which local elites depend on the centre for their power, the state is likely to seek to undertake 'power sharing' with local elites. The maintenance of large districts in Western Uganda reflects the devolution of power to local elites, who then remain dependent on the central government for their power and wealth. The interconnections between these two groups underline the social and economic power advantages of Western Uganda over other regions.

Eastern Uganda

Economic development in Eastern Uganda has included the establishment of commercial farming, particularly of sugar and cotton, and average household consumption levels for the region fall below the levels seen in Western Uganda and above those of the North. However, authors such as Fan and Zhang[400] note that the concentration of economic activity in Jinja Town distorts economic statistics relating to Eastern Uganda, and maintain that the rural poverty rate is as high as it is in Northern Uganda.

In Eastern Uganda, Boone's analysis suggests a model for the political strategies that have been implemented by national rulers in relation to this region. In comparison to the situation in Western Uganda, local elites in the East have not been able to become politically or economically powerful. This is illustrated by the low representation of the Eastern Region in high-status political and military positions in

[399] Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*.
[400] Fan and Zhang, 'Public Expenditure, Growth and Poverty Reduction in Rural Uganda'.

Kampala, such as holding fewer than 10 per cent of senior ministerial positions between 1986 and 2008.[401]

This political strategy is also reflected in the rapid creation of additional districts in the Eastern Region. Compared to Northern Uganda, there is a relatively high level of for-market economic activity in Eastern Uganda, such as the growing and selling of sugar. These economic activities could potentially create a cadre of local leaders who can become sufficiently powerful to rival source of power to those in the capital.[402] There is a high concentration of districts in Eastern Uganda, compared to other areas within Uganda. By creating additional districts in this region, resulting in the creation of a large number of small districts, the economic and political power of the leaders of Eastern districts is reduced.

Northern Uganda

While Northern Uganda was amongst the wealthiest regions of Uganda in the 1950s, with wealth derived from cattle rearing, a range of political, economic and conflict-based changes since this time have made the North the poorest region in Uganda in the early 21st century.[403] Due to the different climate and agricultural conditions in Northern Uganda, this area has traditionally been one in which settled agriculture has been pursued less than in other parts of the country. Instead, residents undertake cattle-rearing, a practice that has been undermined by periods of cattle-raiding from groups in North-Western Uganda.[404] Particularly since the end of the Amin regime at the end of the 1970s, the raiding parties have been heavily armed with weapons abandoned by retreating soldiers loyal to Amin.[405] As a result, economic activity in the northern region has been constrained.

[401] Lindemann, 'Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda'.
[402] Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*.
[403] Oleke, Blystad, and Rekdal, '"'When the Obvious Brother Is Not There'":Political and Cultural Contexts of the Orphan Challenge in Northern Uganda'.
[404] Okidi and Mugambe, 'An Overview of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in Uganda'.
[405] Oleke, Blystad, and Rekdal, '"'When the Obvious Brother Is Not There'": Political and Cultural Contexts of the Orphan Challenge in Northern Uganda'.

Furthermore, Northern Uganda experienced severe civil conflict from 1987 until 2006, due to conflict between the UPDF and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Districts and towns such as Gulu, Pader and Kitgum were especially badly affected by the conflict, with substantial numbers of residents fleeing to neighbouring areas.[406] The brutality with which civilians were treated during the conflict resulted in an estimated 1.3 million people becoming internally displaced during the conflict, many of whom were temporarily housed in IDP camps across Northern Uganda.[407] As well as the impacts on the residents themselves, the conflict resulted in severe constraints to security, service delivery, economic activity and livelihoods development, the effects of which continue to be experienced today.[408]

The combined effects of civil conflict, cattle raids and a climate that does not reliably support large-scale commercial farming has meant that this region has the highest rates of poverty and lowest rates of economic growth within Uganda. The poverty rates of households in Northern Uganda have been found by a number of authors to be the highest in the country; for example, Fan and Zhang[409] found in 2008 that 67 per cent of the rural population of the North lives below the poverty line. Appleton et al.[410] note that even amongst households across Uganda that the authors have classified as 'poor' based on household income levels, those in the North have the lowest levels of household income. Furthermore, Okidi and Mugambe[411] argue that economic statistics for Northern Uganda are made to look more favourable by the relatively high levels of economic activity in towns such as Gulu; poverty levels in rural Northern Uganda are worse than these figures suggest.

In Northern Uganda, Boone's analysis points to a third political strategy compared to those in use in Eastern and Western Uganda. The engagement of the most senior levels of the Ugandan government with this region has been minimal: while many members of the armed forces corps are drawn from Northern Uganda,[412]

[406] Oleke, Blystad, and Rekdal.
[407] Okidi and Mugambe, 'An Overview of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in Uganda'.
[408] Higgins, 'Regional Inequality and Primary Education in Northern Uganda'.
[409] Fan and Zhang, 'Public Expenditure, Growth and Poverty Reduction in Rural Uganda'.
[410] Simon Appleton et al., *Changes in Poverty in Uganda, 1992-1997* (Oxford, UK: Centre for the Study of African Economies, 1999).
[411] Okidi and Mugambe, 'An Overview of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in Uganda'.
[412] Okidi and Mugambe.

comparatively few leaders are from this region. The Northern region is also under-represented in Cabinet and in other senior governance institutions.[413] Uganda's recent history of high rates of economic growth have delivered lower, or even zero, reductions in poverty rates in Northern Uganda compared to Western and Eastern Uganda,[414] meaning that residents of the North have derived less economic benefit from NRM's rule than other regions of Uganda.[415] Public-finance expenditures are also lower in the North than in other regions, with recurrent transfers to the North lower than those to all other regions.[416] Referring to Boone's analysis, the national government's approach in the North has been one of non-incorporation. Local leaders in the North have been essentially left to obtain local power, with national leaders remaining secure in the knowledge that Northerners' lower political and economic circumstances are unlikely to enable Northern leaders to become sufficiently locally powerful to become rivals of the state.

Regional differences: Expected implications for household survey

This section has raised some of the economic, political and power disparities between the three regions of Uganda. Residents of Western Uganda hold greater wealth, economic activity and political power than other regions, while residents of the North hold the least of these. The North also continues to be affected by the long-term consequences of civil conflict, and with different climate conditions from other regions of Uganda. These differences amongst Uganda's regions may be expected to be reflected in the results of the household survey that was conducted for this thesis; districts were chosen from each of Uganda's regions in anticipation of these differences. The responses of survey participants in Lira District, in Northern Uganda, may be expected to reflect higher levels of poverty, lower levels of engagement with the central government, and lower levels of satisfaction with service delivery. For participants in Ntungamo District, in Western Uganda, survey results may be expected to show a greater level of political engagement or familiarity with national-level governance, greater levels of economic activity and interests in commercial farming,

[413] Lindemann, 'Just Another Change of Guard? Broad-Based Politics and Civil War in Museveni's Uganda'.
[414] Deininger and Okidi, 'Growth and Poverty Reduction in Uganda, 1999-2000'.
[415] Okidi and Mugambe, 'An Overview of Chronic Poverty and Development Policy in Uganda'.
[416] Appleton et al., *Changes in Poverty in Uganda, 1992-1997*.

and higher levels of satisfaction with governance and service delivery. Residents of Pallisa District, in Eastern Uganda, may generate results that are more mixed, as this region experiences some economic activity, receives a moderate level of expenditure on service delivery, and has some engagement with national-level political power, but this may not be widely distributed.

As a result of these different levels of satisfaction with governance and service delivery, responses to questions regarding the desirability of a new district may also be expected to vary. Respondents in Western Uganda may be expected to demonstrate lower levels of support for the creation of a new district in this region, as existing levels of expenditure on service delivery and engagement with governance may be high. For respondents in Northern Uganda, the reverse may be expected to be reflected in survey results: frustration and disappointment with governance and service delivery may result in higher demand for more, smaller, districts. Respondents in Eastern Uganda may express a preference for more districts to be created, in particular due to the greater cultural and linguistic diversity in this region, as well as lower levels of service delivery and inclusive governance.

This chapter presents the results of the household survey that was undertaken for this thesis, disaggregated to the level of the village. Core questions are presented in this chapter, with the complete results of the survey provided in Appendix D. Both the numerical responses and the free-answer responses of participants are provided, as well as graphical summaries of responses. The chapter conclusion discusses whether the participants' responses to the household survey did in fact accord with the expected results that are described in this introductory section.

5.2 Village level consultation, participation and responsiveness: Gaps identified

Questions in the household survey ask whether elected representatives are familiar to the community, whether community members participate in village planning meetings, and whether community members feel that the government has responded adequately to their expressed priorities. The responses described in this section highlight the disparities between the priorities that are identified at the village level, and the pre-allocated funding that is received through the top-down budget process.[417] Results are presented in detail below.

Participation: Rates of attendance at village meetings is low

The first theme that was addressed in the survey was the extent to which villagers in the studied communities feel that they are able to, or do, participate in the processes of deciding on key priorities for their village. An important mechanism in the planning and budgeting process is the village meeting, in which the opinions of villagers relating to their perceptions of the development needs of the village are sought. However, in the six studied communities, villagers reported that they did not always attend village planning meetings. When asked *Do you attend village meetings to decide on the development priorities for the village for the next year?*, 65/108 respondents (60 per cent) answered *Yes*, and 39/108 (36 per cent) answered *No*. Of respondents who answered *No* to this question, 17/39 (44 per cent of those who responded *No*) added that they did not participate because they were not invited to the meeting, and a further 13/39 (33 per cent of those who responded *No*) added that they did not participate because they did not believe that such meetings were held in their village.

V1, HH5[418]	No, because "we are not informed."
V2, HH8	No, because “no opportunity to be invited.”
V4, HH6	Yes, every time, because "the whole village participates."

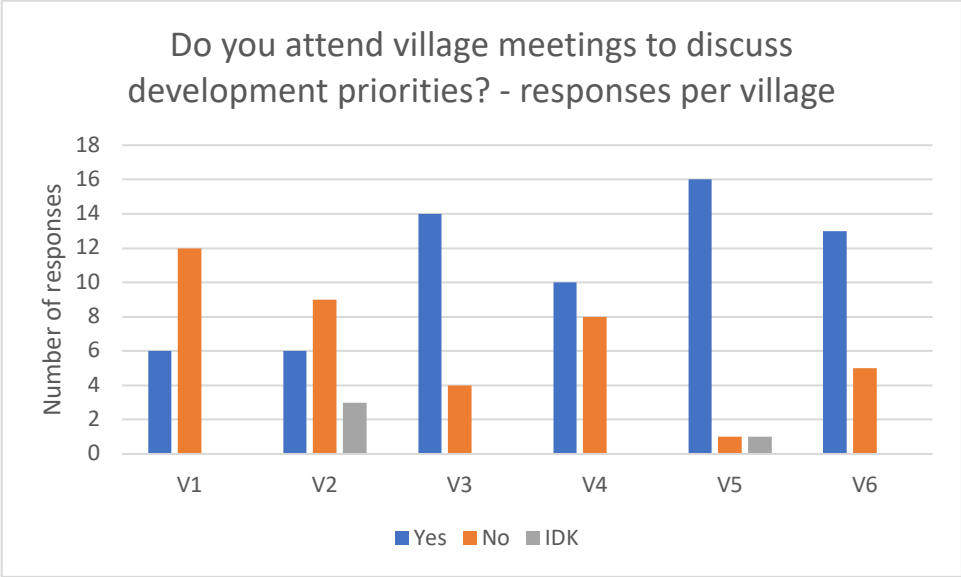
[417] The contrast between the top-down financing system and bottom-up planning system is illustrated in figure 1.2, on page 45.
[418] This phrasing denotes Village 4, Household number 11

This result suggests that village planning meetings, that are theoretically held regularly and are open to the whole community, may not be occurring or may not be fully inclusive within the studied communities. images 5.4 and 5.5 below summarises these results.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, every time	4	1	10	5	10	6
Yes, sometimes	2	5	4	5	6	7
No, Not invited	6	4	0	3	1	3
No, no meeting held	3	3	2	4	0	1
No, [nothing added]	2	1	2	1	0	0
No, Too busy	1	0	0	0	0	0
No, Too old	0	0	0	0	0	1
No, Not paid	0	1	0	0	0	0
IDK	0	3	0	0	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	6	6	14	10	16	13
No	12	9	4	8	1	5
Other response	0	3	0	0	1	0

5.4 Summary of responses to question, 'Do you attend village meetings to decide on the development priorities for the village for the next year?', per studied site



5.5 Responses per field site regarding attendance at village meetings

Responses to this question varied slightly across the studied field sites. Respondents in Pallisa district suggested that they are not likely to attend the village meeting, with 21/36 respondents answering that they do not attend. Respondents in Village 1 were especially unlikely to attend, with 12/18 respondents answering 'No' to this question. Of these respondents in Village 1, some reported that their understanding was that the meetings were not held at all. For other respondents, their non-attendance is because they are not invited to the meeting, suggesting that rather than being an open and village-wide meeting, village meetings are instead only open to selected individuals. This suggests that the resolutions and priorities that are determined within these meetings may not be fully representative of the entire community.

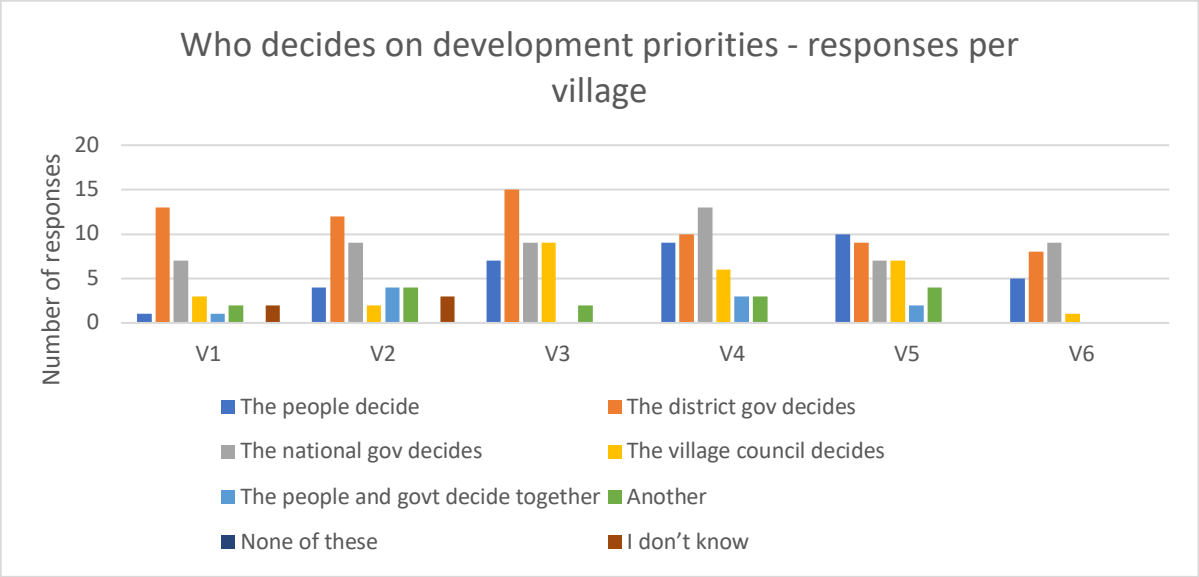
Respondents in Lira District and Ntungamo were more likely to report that they attend the village meeting, particularly in Village 5. The reasons for this variation between the two studied villages in Pallisa and the four studied villages in Lira and Ntungamo is difficult to discern from these answers alone, though responses to other questions in the survey (such as that asking whether a respondent had ever met their local LC5 Chair) suggest a lower level of engagement between elected leaders and the community in Village 1 and Village 2.

Consultation: Questioning villager engagement in choosing village priorities

The second area that was studied in the survey relates to consultation: the extent to which villagers in the studied communities feel that they were asked for their opinions during the priority-development process, for the village's development. Firstly, villagers in the six studied communities responded that they thought that the development priorities of their village were determined by the district government (67/108 respondents, or 67 per cent), or by the national government (54/108 respondents, or 50 per cent). A further 28 (26 per cent) of 108 respondents felt that the village council determines the development priorities of their village. Only 10/108 (9 per cent) of respondents described the villagers themselves as having a role in the priority-determination process, responding 'the people and government decide together' on village priorities. Responses to this question suggest that a majority of respondents conclude that the development priorities of their village are chosen by officials higher-placed than the village level, rather than by villagers themselves. Responses are summarised in images 5.6 and 5.7 below.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
The people decide	1	4	7	9	10	5
District	13	12	15	10	9	8
National government	7	9	9	13	7	9
People and government	1	4	0	3	2	0
Another	2	4	2	3	4	0
None of these	0	0	0	0	0	0
Village council	3	2	9	6	7	1
I don't know	2	3	0	0	0	0

5.6 Responses to question 'How are the development priorities chosen for this district?', per field site



5.7 Responses to question 'How are the development priorities chosen for this district?', per field site

Responses to this question suggest a mixed set of impressions and opinions on who is responsible for identifying development priorities for the district. In Village 1 and 2, in Pallisa, most respondents were of the view that either the district or the national government determines the district's development priorities. Respondents in Lira District were also of the view that the people themselves are able to contribute to identifying the development priorities of the district. However, residents of Lira District were also likely to nominate the national government as the source of district development priorities. This is perhaps a reflection of the leadership by the national government of post-war reconstruction efforts in northern Uganda. Programs such as the PRDP are driven by the national government, rather than being fully decentralised to district-level governments, and this perhaps influences the opinion of villagers that this is the source of the development priorities of the district.

In Village 5, in Ntungamo District, respondents suggested a stronger role for the village council, with 7/18 respondents nominating this level as having a role in determining local development priorities; 10/18 also suggested that the community itself plays a role. On the other hand, respondents in Village 6 (also in Ntungamo District) echoed the perspectives of respondents in Pallisa, in suggesting that the district and national governments have the most important roles in determining district development priorities. These outcomes suggest that while the village council in

Village 5 may play an important and active role in development planning, that is not the case in Village 6, where the organisation level and skill of the village council may be lower.

Relatively few respondents (10/108) nominated cooperation between the community and government as being the source of development priorities for the district, even though this scenario is the closest reflection of the purported officially-sanctioned prioritisation process. While the official bottom-up planning process suggests that communities and councils together determine development priorities, particularly at the village level, this is not reflected in the answers given by survey respondents across the studied sites.

Consultation: Questions regarding villager engagement in village meetings

Secondly regarding consultation, villagers noted that where village development meetings do take place, the discussions at the meetings tend to centre on smaller and village-specific issues, rather than larger concepts like the village's development needs. Comments from respondents in response to the question *What issues are discussed at village meetings?* included "Conflict between neighbours especially concerning witchcraft. Land conflicts",[419] and "How to develop through agriculture, how to fight against poverty through hard work, through cultivation and livestock rearing".[420] These results suggest that topics discussed at village meetings relate to small, locally-resolvable issues, rather than longer-term development planning. Another respondent answered, "Family income improvement. Government programs [that are] currently available",[421] suggesting that the meetings are an opportunity for the LC1 to inform villagers about the services that are available to them, rather than requesting their input on services they would prefer to have delivered to them. Image 5.8 below summarises these results.

[419] Response to household survey question 27. Household 8, village 3 (Lira District).
[420] Response to household survey question 27. Household 10, village 6 (Ntungamo District).
[421] Response to household survey question 27. Household 10, village 1 (Pallisa District).

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Development issues	3	4	6	2	6	3
Education	3	1	4	0	0	0
Healthcare	2	3	3	2	4	4
Security	3	1	1	0	1	7
Agriculture	1	2	4	3	8	6
Income generation	1	0	0	2	4	5
Food security	1	0	0	0	0	0
Conflict resolution	0	2	5	3	1	2
Water	0	2	5	5	5	2
Roads	0	1	2	2	3	0
Other response	11	8	1	8	2	3

5.8 Responses to question, 'What issues are discussed at village meetings?', per studied site

In Ntungamo, the most commonly-discussed topics relate to income generation and agriculture. This is reflective of the higher importance of income-generating agriculture in this location, with commercial farming being undertaken at the studied sites (rather than only subsistence agriculture). This is in accordance with western Uganda's higher level of agricultural and economic development. This result is also reflective of respondents' answer to question 21 (*What do you think are the most important development priorities for this district?*), in which respondents were asked for their opinion on the most important development priorities for the village: respondents in these two sites also answered that agriculture and income generation were their principal priorities. Taken together, these two results suggest that the development priorities that are articulated by the villagers in these sites are also reflected in the issues that are discussed at the village-planning level.

Respondents in Pallisa were more likely to suggest that the main topics discussed in village meetings are more general, relating to development overall, and education provision. When compared to the results of question 21, in which respondents nominated roads, healthcare, and agriculture as the development priorities of the district (in addition to education), this response suggests that the village planning meetings are not felt to be addressing the community's own development priorities. In Lira District, the greater emphasis on conflict resolution points to the recent conflict history of northern Uganda, and also suggests that efforts to reduce local conflict have been decentralised to the village level.

Consultation: Questioning villager engagement in budget preparations

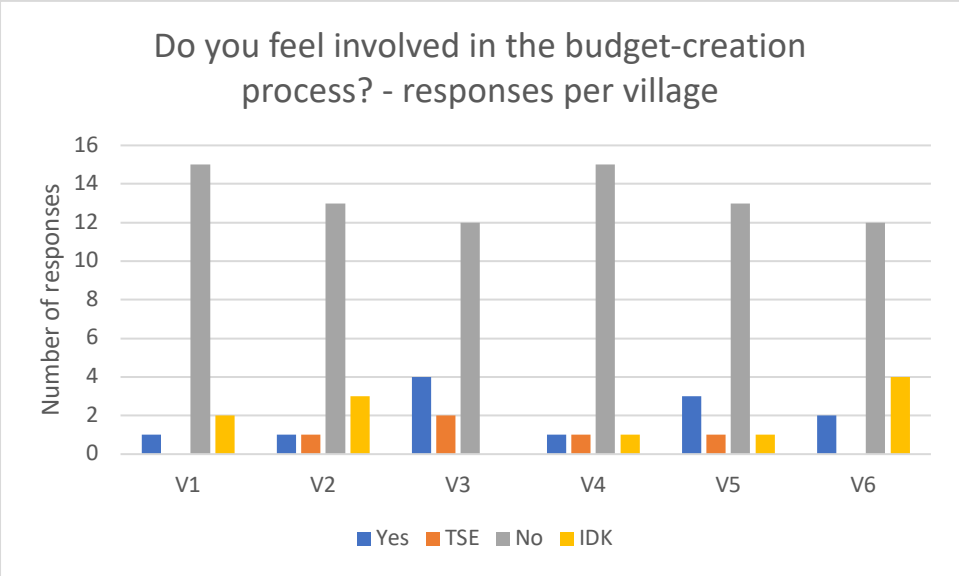
Finally, relating to the issue of consultation, villagers in the studied community reported that, in particular, they did not feel consulted in the preparation of the national annual budget. In answering the question *Do you feel that you are involved in the budget process?*, 10/108 respondents (11 per cent) answered *Yes*, while 80/108 (74 per cent) responded *No*. Those who gave the answer *No* went on to add that the reason they gave this answer was that they were "Not consulted" 43/80 (54 per cent of respondents who answered *No*), or that their only engagement with the budget was that it was read aloud over the radio (16/80, or 20 per cent of respondents who answered *No*). The results are summarised in images 5.9 and 5.10 below.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Leaders listen	1	0	1	1	2	2
Yes - I pay taxes	0	1	1	0	0	0
Yes - Budget is read out	0	0	2	0	0	0
Yes - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	0
TSE	0	1	2	1	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
No - No meeting occurs	5	4	0	0	0	0
No - Not asked/consulted	10	7	9	3	8	4
No - Budget is read only	0	0	3	11	1	1
No - [nothing added]	0	1	0	0	4	7
IDK	2	4	0	2	1	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	1	1	4	1	3	2
To some extent	0	1	2	1	1	0
No	15	12	12	14	13	12
I don't know	2	4	0	2	1	4

5.9 Responses per studied village in response to the question, 'Do you feel involved in the budget creation process?'



5.10 Responses per studied village in response to the question, 'Do you feel involved in the budget creation process?'

The responses to these questions raise the question of what are the theoretical and actual benefits that accrue to household members, from the introduction of participatory, 'bottom-up' planning. Under the rationales of decentralisation, participatory budgeting and planning theoretically contribute to democratisation, by encouraging villagers to demand high governance standards from their leaders, and by feeling included in decision-making processes.[422] The experiences of respondents to the household survey suggest that this is not the case for the studied communities. Across each of the studied field sites, respondents report that they do not feel that they are involved in the process of formulating the national budget, even though this is one of the stated goals of the bottom-up planning process. Respondents report that only some individuals participate, that village meetings focus on locally-solvable issues rather than longer-term plans, and that overall, few feel involved in the budget process. The argument for deepening democracy via decentralisation, in the studied communities, does not appear strong.

Complaint-making: Mobilising a government response to service delivery flaws

A third rationale that underpins the introduction of decentralisation into a society is that by bringing the location of government representatives nearer to the population, service end-users will be more easily able to complain to government in the case of poor-quality services. That is, there can be better information provided to government agents by citizens regarding service-delivery standards, compared to that provided to a national government by citizens. Questions in the survey relating to responsiveness build on the concept of 'voice' as described by Hirschman,[423] in the sense of making a complaint with the goal of gaining improvement to a service. Accordingly, the household survey included questions relating to complaint-making behaviour by citizens in the six studied communities. When asked, *Have you ever made a complaint about a service that was not provided, or was of poor quality?*, 32/108 (30 per cent) answered *Yes*, while 73/108 respondents (68 per cent) answered *No.*[424] Respondents who answered *No* to this question added comments such as:

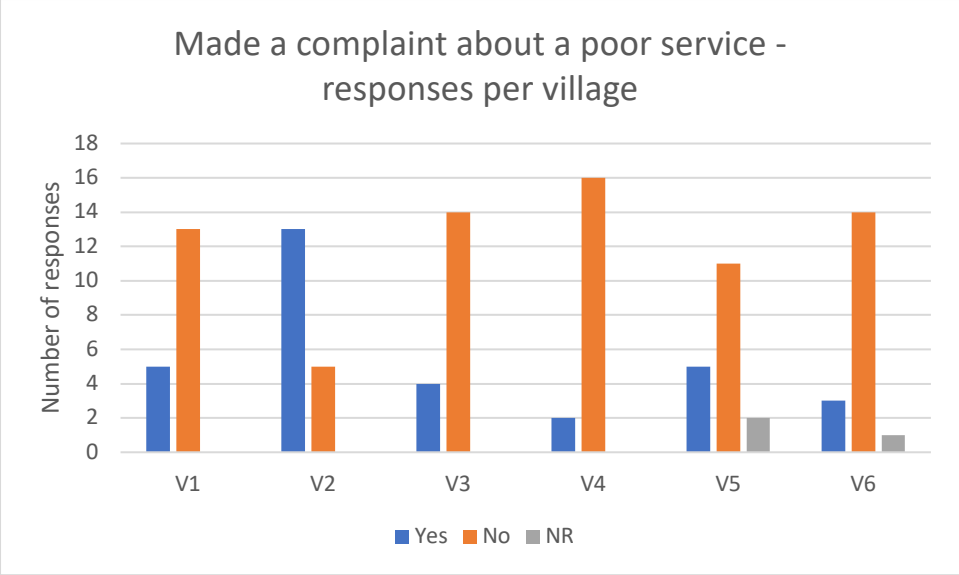
[422] Ahikire, 'Localised or Localising Democracy'.
[423] Hischman, 'Exit, Voice and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History'.
[424] A further 3/108 respondents (3 per cent) gave nil response to this question.

V3, HH1	No, never. “People are taken like they are at fault so most times they keep quiet.”
V3, HH4	No, never. “It is useless, no one listens.”
V4, HH13	No, never. "Fear raising their complaint because you can be taken as someone who is against government services."
V5, HH2	Yes, more than once, "but the complaint never helped."

These responses suggest that villagers may fear reprisals from complaint-making, or perceive that the responsiveness of government to complaints may not warrant the effort or transaction cost required to make the complaint. The responses to this question are summarised below in images 5.11 and 5.12 below.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	2	3	0	0	2	0
Yes, more	3	10	4	2	3	3
No, never	13	5	14	16	11	14
No response	0	0	0	0	2	1

5.11 Responses per field site regarding complaint-making behaviour



5.12 Responses per field site regarding complaint-making behaviour

A majority of respondents in Villages 1 and 3-6 suggested that they have not undertaken a formal complaint about service delivery quality or absences. Only in Village 2, in Pallisa, did a small majority of respondents (10/18) answer that they have done so on more than one occasion.

Responsiveness: The extent of government response to villagers' complaints

A fourth topic that was explored in the household survey is the extent to which villagers feel that government is responsive to their development priorities, or to their complaints about the quality of local service delivery. Questions in the household survey sought to investigate the extent to which citizens in the studied sites felt that government was responsive to complaints they made about poor-quality public

services. Following the question *Have you ever made a complaint about a service that was not provided, or was of poor quality?*, villagers were then asked, *If yes, what was the result of your complaint?* In answer to this second question, of the 37 respondents who had reported a complaint, only one respondent answered that they thought their complaint had been fully resolved. Seven of these 37 respondents (19 per cent) answered that they thought their complaint had been partly resolved, while 29/37 (78 per cent) responded that their complaint had not been resolved.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Resolved	0	0	0	0	1	0
Partly resolved	2	3	0	1	1	0
Not resolved	6	12	4	1	3	3
n/a	9	1	14	16	13	15
IDK	1	2	0	0	0	0

The majority of respondents in Village 2 who had complained about a service reported that their complaint was not addressed. Only one respondent across all villages (1/108), in Village 5 (Ntungamo), reported that they felt their complaint had been fully addressed.

Villagers' comments further explained:

V2, HH1	"Nothing has been done about it."
V2, HH7	"They promised to forward our complaints but no change happened afterwards."
V5, HH13	"Nothing changed, the leaders never did anything to address the problem."
V2, HH11	"Was told to be patient and wait."
V3, HH12	"No result. Things remained the same."
V4, HH17	"They were told to contribute money yet they did not have [money]."

Overall, participants indicated that in the majority of cases, the responsiveness of government agencies and individuals to citizens' complaints had not generated improvements to public services in the studied sites, despite this being one of the goals of implementing decentralisation in Uganda.

Responsiveness: Government response to village development priorities

Secondly, regarding the responsiveness of government to the expressed development priorities of the community, survey participants were asked *Overall, in your opinion, does the government address the development priorities from this village?* 20/108 (19 per cent) of respondents answered *Yes*, 30/108 (28 per cent) answered *To some extent* and 43/108 (40 per cent) answered *No*.[425] Of the 20 respondents who answered *Yes* to this question, the explanatory comment offered by 17 of that 20 (85 per cent) was that "Services exist". For the 30 respondents who answered *To some extent*, the explanatory comment offered by 18 (60 per cent) was "Some services exist". However, of the 43 respondents who answered *No*, 26 (61 per cent) added the explanatory comment "Services are poor", and 15 (35 per cent) explained "Concerns are unaddressed". Images 5.13 and 5.14 below present the results of this question.[426]

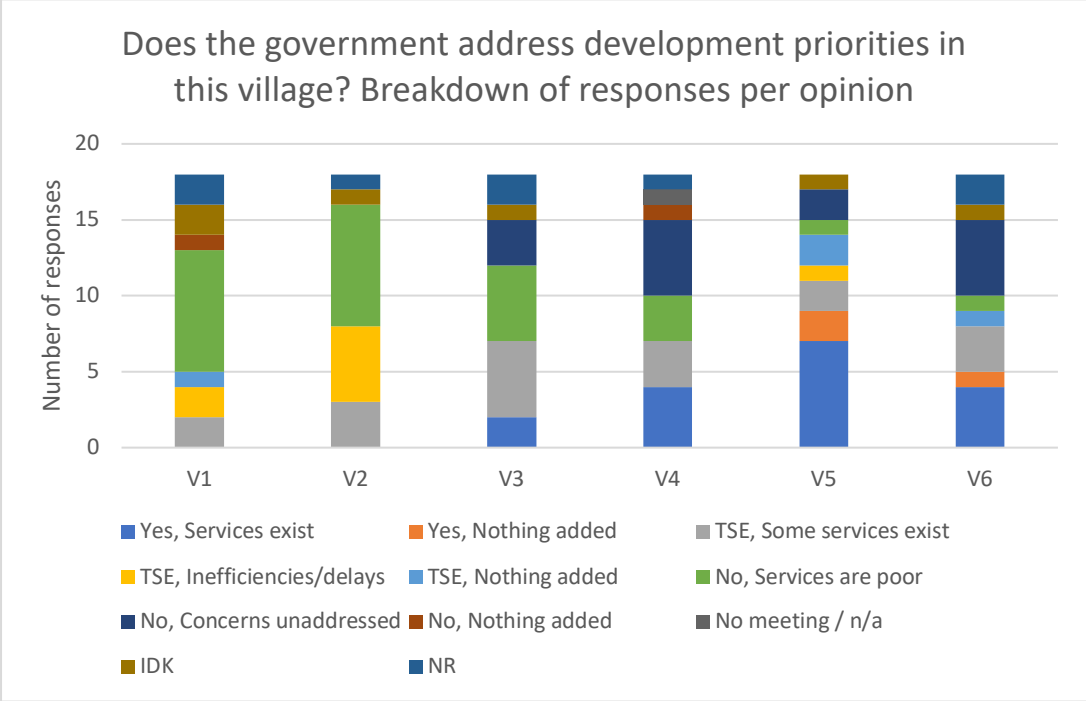
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, Services exist	0	0	2	4	7	4
Yes, Nothing added	0	0	0	0	2	1
TSE, Some services exist	2	3	5	3	2	3
TSE, Inefficiencies/delays	2	5	0	0	1	0
TSE, Nothing added	1	0	0	0	2	1
No, Services are poor	8	8	5	3	1	1

[425] A further 6/108 responded *I Don't Know*, and 9/108 gave nil response to this question.
[426] The response TSE denotes 'To some extent'.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
No, Concerns unaddressed	0	0	3	5	2	5
No, Nothing added	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other response	4	2	3	3	1	3

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	0	0	2	4	9	5
TSE	5	8	5	3	5	4
No	9	8	8	8	3	6
Other response	4	2	3	3	1	3

5.13 Responses per village on the extent of government responsiveness to village development priorities



5.14 Responses per village on the extent of government responsiveness to village development priorities

The open-ended comments offered by respondents in answer to this question revealed an interesting layer of complexity in the responses to this question. Some of

the respondents who answered *Yes* to this question – they feel that government had addressed the development priorities of the village – then explained in the free-comments that they felt this way because their household had received goods from the government. For example, responses included:

V5, HH16	Yes, because "They [the respondents] were given NAADS, cows, goats, hens, beans and pigs, and sometimes money, hoes and pangas"
V4, HH14	Yes, because "When people go for meetings at the subcounty, they come back with seeds for plants"

Conversely, respondents who did not feel that government was adequately addressing the development priorities of the village (and had answered *No* to this question) explained:

V5, HH1	No, because “They have never solved our problems like extending electricity to our village"
V4, HH1	No, because "I am yet to see development priorities being fulfilled here"
V4, HH6	No, because "it’s over 7 years that we share our development priorities but nothing beneficial is being seen."
V5, HH18	No, because "the needs are still unmet, government promises but never gives"
V5, HH2	No, because “Poor roads, there are no drugs in the health centre and no medical personnels [*sic*], few teachers in schools and yet pupils are so many”
V3, HH5	No, because "Government does not address issues concerning education, agriculture"

Responses to this question suggest that respondents in the different studied sites had different levels of satisfaction with the service delivery and responsiveness offered by the government. (For the purposes of this question, ‘government’ was not defined according to a specific level; the respondent instead answered the question

with their impression of the entire government structure.) In Pallisa, around half of the respondents did not think that government was addressing the development needs of the village. In Village 2, some respondents answered that they did feel that government partly addressed the development needs of the village, but only partially, or with inefficiencies or delays. In Lira, nearly half of the respondents in each village thought that government was addressing the development needs of the village, with other responses balanced between approval of government (answering 'Yes'), partial satisfaction (answering 'To some extent', with some services in existence) or uncertainty (answering 'I don't know').

In Ntungamo, responses were different between the two studied sites. In Village 5, where previous responses suggest that the village council is more active in local development planning and consultation, 14/18 respondents answered that they felt government was at least partially addressing local development needs (answering 'Yes' or 'To some extent'). However, in Village 6, responses were divided between full approval, partial approval, disapproval, and uncertainty. This suggests that respondents have had different experiences or hold different views on the extent of government success in addressing local development priorities in this location.

These results suggest that villagers in the studied sites who do perceive that the government has addressed their development needs hold this view because they have been given *individual* assets or goods to facilitate their own income generation, at the level of the household. On the other hand, those who argue that government has not responded to the development needs of the community explain that government has not provided adequate levels of public services to the *community* as a whole. This contrast reveals differences among respondents in the survey sites as to their expectations of what government will provide to them. For those who expect small assets or goods to be provided, government is more likely to seem responsive where it delivers these small things.[427] However, respondents who understand and expect that government is to provide a higher level of services and utilities, are less likely to report that they feel the government has responded to these needs.

[427] Smith et al., 'Livelihood Diversification in Uganda'.

5.3 Village-level perceptions of the poor quality and reach of service delivery

According to the rationales underpinning decentralisation, the introduction of sub-national governments should improve the quality and targeting of service delivery, as citizens can more easily hold a local government to account for service delivery than they can hold a more remote central government to account. This is because (according to the theory[428] of decentralisation) citizens have better access to information about the performance of a local government, through direct observation and direct interaction. This section presents results from the household survey that asked questions regarding the quality and accessibility of services, and the extent to which villagers in the studied sites feel that service delivery will tend to improve over time. It is suggested by the results that the institutional shortcomings of decentralisation have contributed to poor-quality and high-cost services, according to the village-level respondents in the six studied field sites. As discussed in section 5.2, given the greater level of development of Western Uganda, it could be expected that field sites from this region (sites Village 5 and Village 6) reflect a greater level of satisfaction with the standard of service delivery. Respondents in Village 5 and Village 6 were indeed slightly less likely to report that there were medicine stock-outs at their local healthcare post, and slightly less likely to report that their child had missed school for more than one week. However, other than in answer to these two questions, the responses given by household members across the six studied sites did not vary significantly from one region to another.

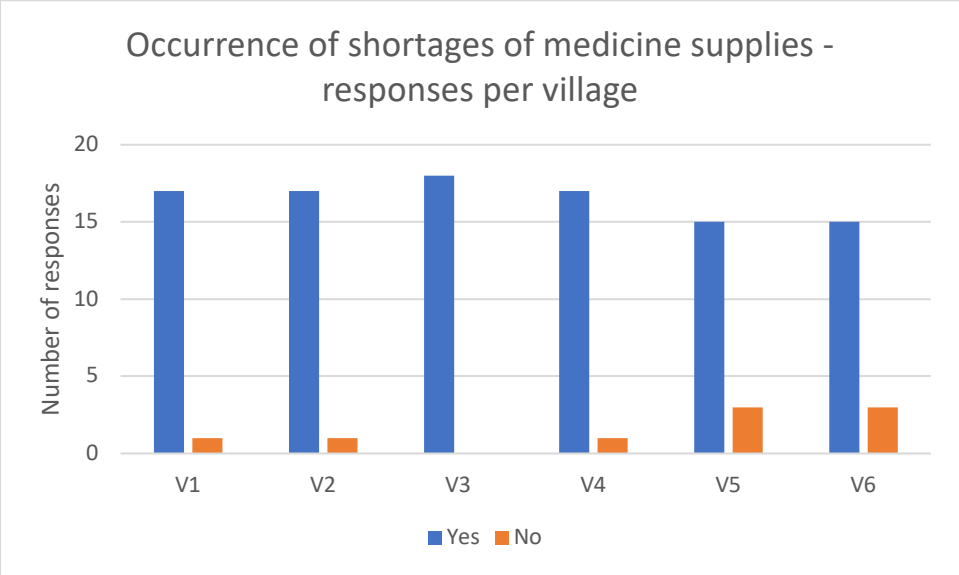
Service quality and availability: Shortages in supply are frequent

A number of respondents to the household survey reported that there are services in their local area that are either of a low standard, or are entirely absent. When asked, *Has there ever been a time you needed a medicine, but there was no stock/supplies?*, 99/108 respondents (92 per cent) answered *Yes*. This result is illustrated in images 5.15 and 5.16 below.

[428] As described by authors such as Crook and Manor, 'Democratic Decentralisation and Institutional Performance'.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	7	6	3	1	4	4
Yes, more	10	10	15	16	11	11
No, never	1	1	0	1	3	3
I don't know	0	1	0	0	0	0

5.15 Responses per village regarding medicine stock-outs



5.16 Responses per village regarding medicine stock-outs

Responses to this question suggest that medical stock-outs are a consistent problem across each of the studied sites. This includes in Ntungamo District (Village 5 and Village 6), where the higher levels of development in this region might have been expected to show a higher level of respondent satisfaction with the quality of service delivery, such as in fewer instances of drug stock-outs.

When then asked how villagers responded to this situation, 81/99 (82 per cent) of those who had answered *Yes* explained that they travel to another healthcare service post to seek the medication there. The transaction cost of obtaining healthcare treatment increases as a result, and the time and resources of villagers in the studied sites is absorbed unnecessarily. A further 11/99 (11 per cent) of respondents who

answered that there has been a stock-out when they needed medication answered that when this stock-out occurred, they went without the medicine they required. 7/99 (7 per cent) reported that they used a different medicine from the one that had been recommended to them; this solution was reported most frequently in Village 1. Otherwise, responses to this question were broadly consistent across the studied sites. Image 5.17 below presents the range of responses to this question.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Assistance – leader	1	1	0	2	0	0
Assistance - relative	4	1	4	1	0	0
Get at another facility	11	11	16	14	14	15
Did nothing / not get	2	2	1	3	2	1
Different medicine	6	0	0	0	0	1
Used local herbs	2	1	0	1	0	0
Other response	2	6	1	1	3	2

5.17 Responses to the question, 'If there was a stock-out, what did you do?', per studied site

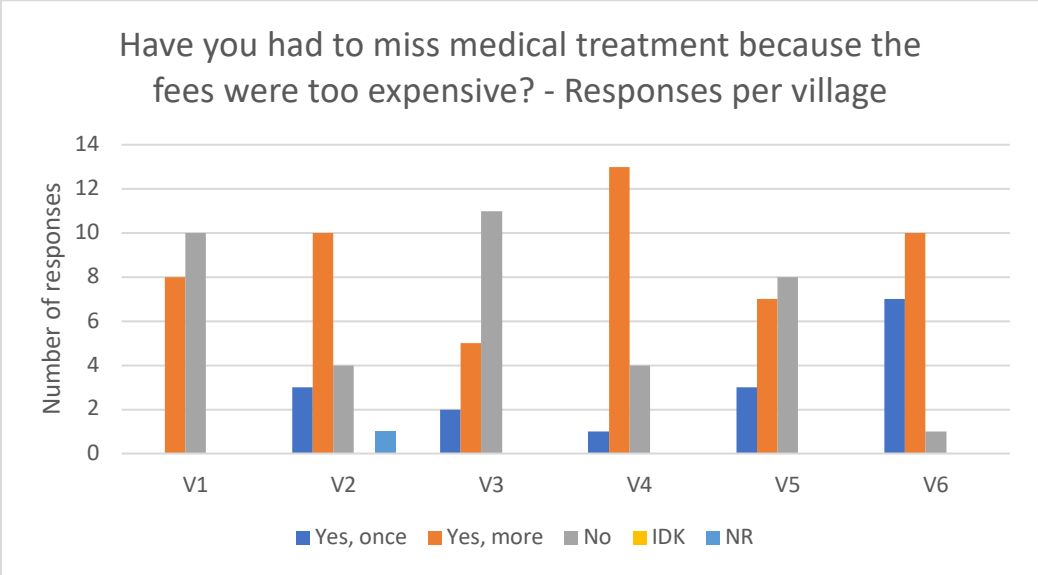
Service affordability: The burden of healthcare fees

In addition to being of a low standard, participants reported that user fees for public services can render the service inaccessible in practice. When asked *If you need to use a health service, do you have to pay fees (in cash)?*, 63/108 respondents (58 per cent) responded *Yes*. In response to a follow-up question, *Have you ever had to miss medical treatment because the fees were too expensive?*, 70/108 respondents

(65 per cent) responded *Yes*. The following images 5.18 and 5.19 summarises these results.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	0	3	2	1	3	7
Yes, more	8	10	5	13	7	10
No	10	4	11	4	8	1
I don't know	0	1	0	0	0	0

5.18 Responses per village regarding exclusion from healthcare services due to user fees



5.19 Responses per village regarding exclusion from healthcare services due to user fees

Responses to this question suggest that when respondents are required to pay fees for medical treatment, these fees are problematically expensive, and represent a barrier to accessing medical care. However, the answers given by respondents to this question were varied, even within one district. For example, within Village 1, respondents were almost as likely to answer "yes, more than once" than "no" in response to this question. Likewise, the two studied sites in Lira District reported very different results from one another, as did the two studied sites in Ntungamo District.

While the reasons for these local inconsistencies are difficult to discern from the survey alone, it is possible that different healthcare posts have adopted different fee structures or fee-charging practices, resulting in inconsistent and inequitable outcomes for villagers even within the same community.

Service affordability: The burden of school fees

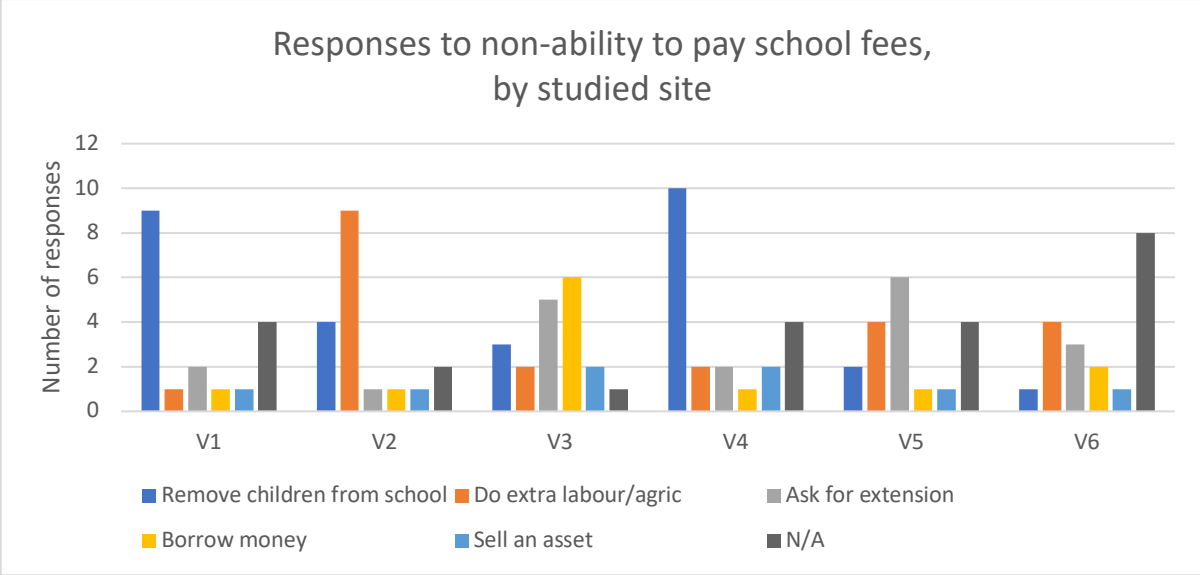
Regarding education access, school fees were reported to be particularly problematic for a number of households. In response to the question, *Do you have to pay school fees (in cash)?*, 93/108 (86 per cent) of respondents answered *Yes.* When then asked, *Is it hard to find money to pay for school fees?*, 81/93 (87 per cent) of those respondents again answered *Yes*.

When then asked, *What do you do if you can't find the money to pay school fees?*, 29/93 (31 per cent) of respondents reported that they remove their child from school until they can afford to pay the fees. 22/93 (24 per cent) answered that they undertake extra labour to save money for the fees, 19/93 (20 per cent) report that they negotiate an extension for payment with the school, 12/93 (13 per cent) report that they borrow money in order to finance school fees, and 8/93 (9 per cent) report that they sell an asset in order to finance the payment of school fees. These responses are summarised in images 5.20 to 5.22 below.

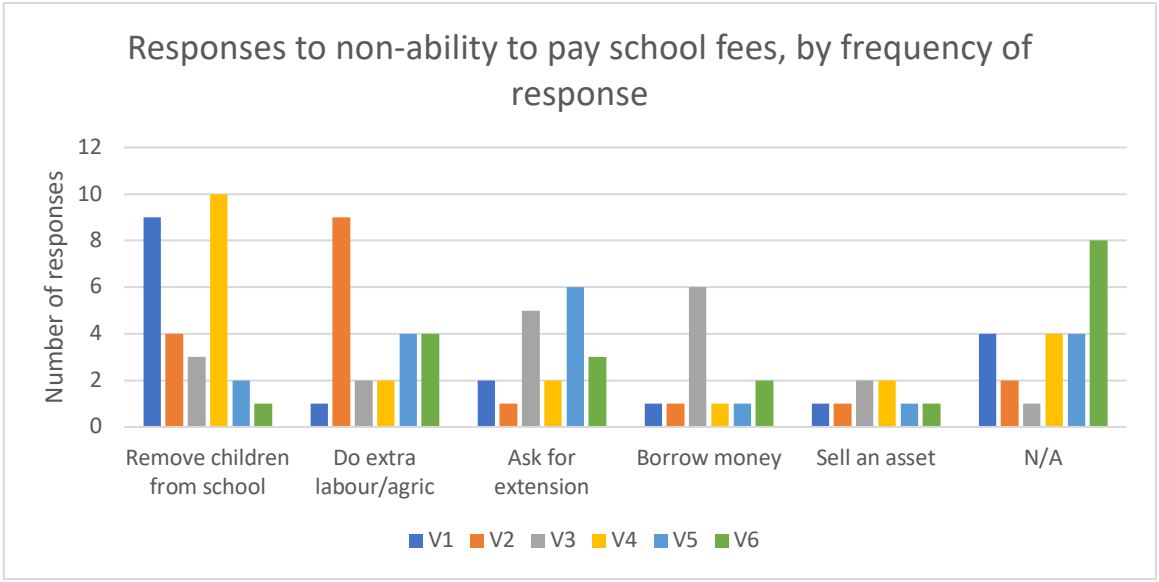
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Remove children from school	9	4	3	10	2	1
Do extra labour/agric	1	9	2	2	4	4
Ask for extension	2	1	5	2	6	3
Borrow money	1	1	6	1	1	2

Sell an asset	1	1	2	2	1	1
n/a	4	0	1	4	4	8
IDK	0	2	0	0	0	0

5.20 Responses to the question 'What do you do if you cannot find money for school fees?' per studied site



5.21 Responses to the question 'What do you do if you cannot find money for school fees?' per studied site



5.22 Responses per survival strategies when school fees are unaffordable

Respondents to this question reported a range of different strategies to manage challenges that arise in being able to afford school fees for their children. In particular,

some strategies are more prevalent in some of the studied locations than in others – though notably, there are not necessarily clear patterns between studied *districts*. In some locations, particularly in Village 1 and Village 4 (in Pallisa and Lira Districts, respectively), parents remove their children from school until the fees can be paid (even though this may be a substantial time period). Some parents, particularly in Village 3 and Village 5 (in Lira and Ntungamo, respectively), attempt to negotiate with school leaders to accept their children the funds are sought.

Other parents undertake additional labour, or produce an agricultural surplus that is then sold in order to raise money for fees; this appears to be a particularly common strategy in Village 2 (in Pallisa District). In Village 6, respondents were more likely to respond that they are not often troubled by the need to raise money for school fees. For those who are, the main strategy involved was to undertake additional labour or agricultural production. These responses in Village 6 reflect the higher level of economic activity in place in this village (in Ntungamo District), with respondents able to use commercial farming to increase their access to the cash needed for payments of school fees.

For still others, strategies involve either the acquisition of debt or the liquidation of an asset, suggesting that parents are willing to undertake financial hardship in order to ensure that their children are able to attend school. The selling of household assets, such as livestock, in order to raise funds for school-fee payments raises the possibility that households may be made worse off financially from the burden of paying school fees. In particular, the GoU policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) has generated circumstances in which households are liquidating their assets in order to finance school fees for their children. However, if the quality of the education that is then provided is of a low standard, a family may arguably be made worse-off by the children attending school, if challenging financial circumstances are entered into but the education received in return is poor. Free-text responses to this question revealed the degree of hardship faced in order to obtain money for school fees:

V2, HH1	“I sell part of my land and livestock”
V3, HH1	"Send the child to school and ask the headmaster to give you some time to pay"
V1, HH3	"Children have to drop out of school."
V3, HH5 and HH6	"Get a loan"
V2, HH7	“Child misses exams and I can’t do much”
V3, HH8	"They stay at home, I don't do anything"
V5, HH9	"Plead with teachers as they look for the money"
V1, HH10	“Children miss lunch”

Responses to the question ‘What do you do if you cannot find money for school fees?’

Of the 56 respondents who reported that at least one of their children had missed school for at least one week on at least one occasion, 37 (66 per cent) reported that the reason for this absence was that school fees had not been paid for that child, so they had been removed from school until fees were paid. This result suggests that for a number of households in the studied sites, school fees are sufficiently burdensome that children’s educational access is being impaired. This result is presented in image 5.23 below:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Child was ill	8	9	4	2	3	6
Fees not paid	6	6	4	12	5	4
Teacher not attended	2	3	0	0	1	0
n/a (child has not missed)	9	5	10	6	10	11

5.23 Responses to the question, ‘If your child has missed more than one week of school, why was this?’ per studied site

In Village 4 (Lira District) in particular, school fees are difficult to afford; when fees cannot be paid, the child is removed from school; and that this outcome has caused children to miss more than one week of school on at least one occasion. The higher number of respondents who reported these outcomes from Village 4 suggests that holding cash on hand is a particular problem in this location, perhaps suggesting an elevated level of poverty. The lower proportion of respondents who reported these outcomes in Village 5 and Village 6 suggest that higher levels of commercial-agriculture activity in these locations has had a positive impact on parents' access to cash, and thus on children's attendance at school.

5.4 Villagers' techniques to obtain services in the absence of formal delivery

Where public services have not been adequately provided, household members in the studied communities are able to enact alternative strategies to access services and resources. These include financial survival techniques, locational techniques, and alternative service delivery techniques. For villagers, maintaining financial stability and sustainability is challenging, in the context of working in subsistence farming and with low levels of access to formal or informal banking institutions. These results suggest that villagers seek alternative market solutions and social capital strategies to manage the shortcomings of the decentralisation system. Respondents in Village 3 and Village 4 (in Lira District) reported a level of economic activity that is lower than in other studied sites, such as lower trading of household assets, potentially reflecting the greater levels of poverty in Lira District. However, other than in response to questions about trading household assets, responses in this section were broadly comparable across the six studied field sites.

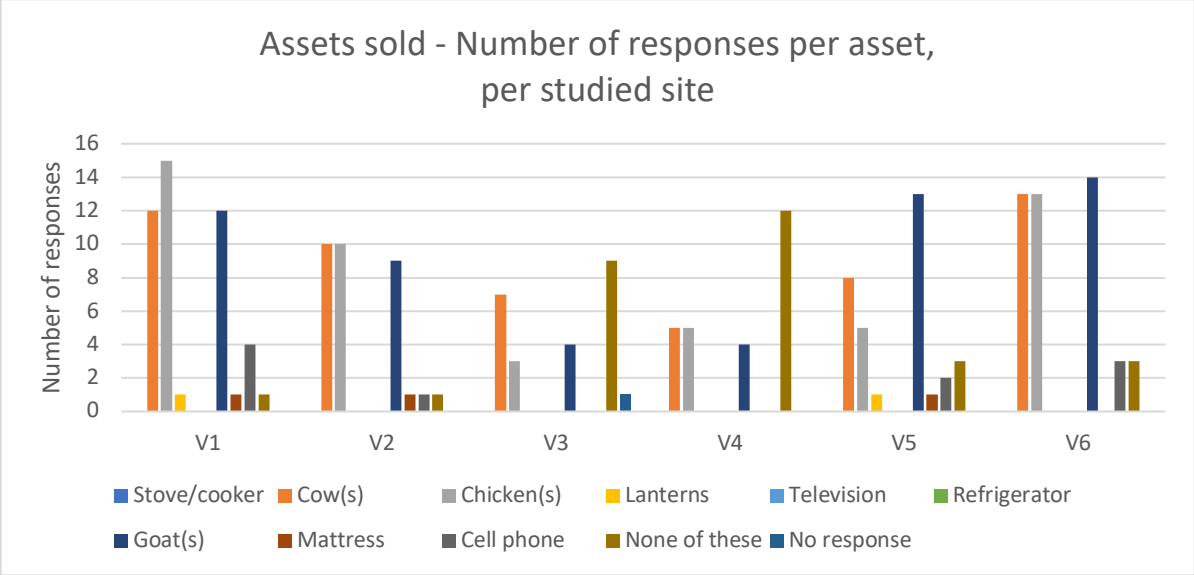
Financial sustainability: Strategies for coping with formal financial exclusion

Participants in the household survey reported that their most common method for ensuring financial sustainability under these circumstances is to purchase and sell livestock, particularly small livestock such as goats and chickens, as a store of wealth that can be easily converted into liquidity when needed. Of all 108 respondents, 56 (52 per cent) reported having ever sold a goat for reasons of needing financial resources, 55 (51 per cent) reported having sold a cow, and 51 (47 per cent) reported having sold a chicken. 29/108 (27 per cent) reported not having sold any of these items. Respondents in Village 3 and Village 4 (Lira District) were less likely to report that they had traded a household asset. Images 5.24 to 5.26 below illustrate these responses.

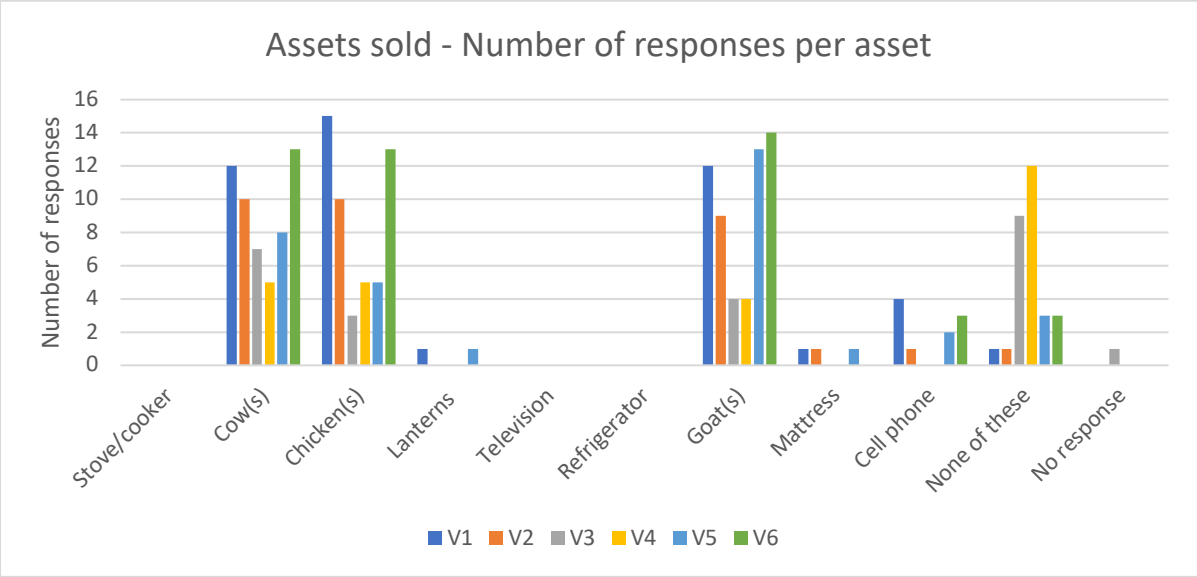
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Stove/cooker	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cow(s)	12	10	7	5	8	13
Chicken(s)	15	10	3	5	5	13

Lanterns	1	0	0	0	1	0
Television	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refrigerator	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goat(s)	12	9	4	4	13	14
Mattress	1	1	0	0	1	0
Cell phone	4	1	0	0	2	3
None of these	1	1	9	12	3	3
Other response	0	0	1	0	0	0

5.24 Responses to the question, 'Have you ever owned these assets in the past, but have had to sell them?', per studied site



5.25 Responses to the question, 'Have you ever owned these assets in the past, but have had to sell them?', per studied site



5.26 Responses per response relating to trading assets as a financial survival strategy

Responses to this question illustrate the tradability of livestock, reflecting their use as a store of value. In the absence of formal banking services, livestock assets can be liquidated at times of hardship in order to provide a financial resource. The higher number of respondents who reported this outcome from Ntungamo perhaps reflects the higher level of economic activity in the West, with the opposite being true of respondents in Lira District.

<u>Financial sustainability: Local poverty indicators</u>

In addition to responses relating to their own household's financial strategies, respondents were asked whether there were households in the village that they thought were living in poverty, and if so, how this state of poverty could be identified. Responses to this question are given as follows in image 5.27:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Absence of:						
- *Land / Tools*	7	6	4	7	6	8

- Housing	9	6	3	2	10	4
- Clothing	4	5	2	1	0	1
- Education / Fees	5	4	5	8	2	1
- Food	7	10	7	11	8	5
- Livestock	3	4	4	7	4	3
- Health	4	3	1	3	0	0
- Income	5	6	5	9	7	6
- Water	0	1	0	2	0	0
- Transport	0	0	1	2	0	0
- Radio	0	0	0	1	0	0
Widows / orphans	1	1	5	2	1	1
Disabled / ill / elderly	0	0	3	0	1	0
Other response	0	0	0	0	1	3

5.27 Responses to the question, 'How do you know which households are poor?' per studied site

Responses to this question give an insight into the ways in which households (other than the respondent's own household) enact survival strategies to manage their financial needs. For example, respondents answered that a household could be considered to be living in poverty if its members engaged in practices such as:

V3, HH4	"Sleeps hungry (no meals). No equipment for farming. Such people go to other homes to do donkey work in order to get something"
V3, HH1	"Most households have to sell their property, especially livestock, to acquire basic needs eg if someone is a widow"
V3, HH7	"A single mother household when the whole burden of raising up the children falls on her (separated marriage). Widowers who have no one to support them (they do all the household chores). Widows who have all the burden of raising children i.e. from school fees to feeding"

Responses to the question, 'How do you know which households are poor?

Responses to this question reflect the importance of a household's social and economic context in determining the poverty level of its inhabitants. Households containing individuals whose personal circumstances will contribute to impoverishment, such as an illness, are known within their own community to be vulnerable to poverty. That is, attributes of individual household members determine the vulnerability of that household to poverty.

In addition, these answers indicate that households that are experiencing a period of financial stress will engage in strategies like selling an asset or undertaking additional work to generate income. This might be in response to a financial shock, such as an illness or divorce. Where these strategies cannot be enacted, households are not able to rely on basic service delivery or social protection provided by the state, and so are forced to remain living in severe poverty.

Across the three studied districts, commonalities are observed to some extent in the variables that suggest a risk of poverty for a particular household, with a number of responses being observed across all six of the studied districts. In Lira district, in Uganda's conflict-affected northern region, households that are comprised of widows or orphans are thought to be especially disadvantaged, as well as those without an income, and this is reflected in problematically-low levels of access to food. In Village 5 in Ntungamo district, and in Village 1 in Pallisa district, poor-quality housing is thought by respondents to be an especially powerful indicator of poverty. For respondents in all three districts, a lack of access to food as an indicator of a household experiencing poverty. A lack of access to land or farming tools is also nominated by around one-third of respondents across all sites as indicating a risk of impoverishment for households.

Information access strategies: Villagers' reliance on others for information

Secondly, villagers in the studied locations described strategies for gaining access to the information they require in order to advocate for their rights and development needs, without moving from their home village or nearby locations. In

theory, the introduction of decentralisation should result in citizens having greater access to information about the performance of government, through being able to observe the activities of nearby governments, and through communication with representatives of those governments. However, where the system of village meetings has not been successful in providing this information to households, citizens engage in alternative strategies to gain access to information. Citizens must also negotiate the possibility of having low levels of literacy, owing to their low levels of educational access (noting that a minority of respondents to the survey had been able to attend school beyond primary level). To manage this context, respondents to the household survey indicated that their primary source of information for news, for political information, and for information relating to public services was the radio. 94/108 respondents (87 per cent) reported that this was their primary information source. A further 65/108 (60 per cent)[429] reported that their main information source was "another person", about whom they further specified the LC1 Chair as their information source. These results are summarised in image 5.28 below:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Newspapers	0	0	1	3	5	3
Radio	15	16	14	10	17	15
TV	0	0	0	0	3	1
Noticeboards	1	0	0	0	3	2
Internet	0	0	0	1	0	0
Govt office	9	4	0	0	1	0
Another person	10	9	13	15	12	11
Other	0	0	2	0	2	0

5.28 Response to question, 'Where do you find out information about political issues?', per studied site

Responses point to the importance of radio communications for conveying information regarding available public services, and information about political issues,

[429] Respondents were asked to give as many answers to this question as were relevant for their circumstances, so the total number of responses exceeds 108.

with a large proportion of respondents nominating this is a principal information source. This was a consistent outcome across all six of the studied sites. Furthermore, a majority of respondents reported that they obtain information about services and political issues from another person. In Pallisa District, respondents in Village 1 and Village 2 report that they seek information about political issues and available services from the local government office, which was not reported by respondents in other areas. This suggests a greater level of familiarity with local government as a source of information in this area than in other regions.

It is noteworthy that the main information sources for most respondents – radio, and another person – are each sources that do not require any level of literacy to be accessed. In the context of rural areas where education access is not high, this may be an important factor in determining which information sources are chosen. However, these are also communication channels that can easily be influenced by government leaders if they should choose to do so, such as through campaigns regarding NRM-affiliated election candidates.

Villagers' strategies for survival in the absence of public services and utilities

Where government-provided services were of low quality or were not accessible to household members, individuals and households were in some circumstances able to develop private or community-based solutions to address these needs. For example, as noted above in section 5.3, 94/108 (87 per cent) of survey respondents reported that they do not have electricity available at their home. 12/108 respondents (11 per cent) report that they have been able to gain access to electricity, via self-purchasing a simple solar panel as a private solution to this lack of public services. In addition, 72/108 households (67 per cent) reported that they owned a lantern, to access a light source. In terms of housing construction, 104/108 respondents (96 per cent) reported that they either constructed their home themselves, or their relative constructed it, generally using locally-available natural materials such as mud, as illustrated in image 5.29 below:

Walls	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Bricks	17	18	15	15	7	6
Mud	1	0	0	0	1	0
Cement	0	0	3	0	1	5
Earth	0	0	0	3	0	0
Reeds	0	0	0	0	4	6
Dung	0	0	0	0	5	1

Roof	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Iron	15	12	11	3	18	18
Grass/ Thatch	3	6	7	15	0	0

Floor	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Cement	5	4	3	0	4	5
Ground/mud/earth	12	13	15	18	8	9
Sand	0	0	0	0	5	4
Tiles	0	0	0	0	1	0
Other response	1	1	0	0	0	0

5.29 Material used in the construction of respondents' home, per studied site

Differences in the construction materials of the homes of respondents reflect differences in both naturally-available materials in the studied districts, and in the respective poverty levels of the studied districts. In Ntungamo district, in Uganda's wealthier western region, homes of participants are more likely to be constructed using at least some artificial materials, such as cement and iron. In Lira and Pallisa, homes are constructed using materials that can be collected from the local natural environment, such as thatch. Particularly in Lira district, in Uganda's conflict-affected northern region, houses of participants are constructed using thatching for rooves, and the bare earth or mud for flooring.

Villagers' strategies for dispute resolution

When discussing the resolution of disputes within the community (such as land-ownership disputes), in the absence of formal dispute-resolution services or systems, 55/108 respondents (51 per cent) responded that they ask the clan chiefs of the local area to adjudicate disputes. Only 14/108 (13 per cent) of respondents reported that they request assistance from the police, the formal agency of the state, in these cases. Through mechanisms such as these, respondents to the household survey report that they are in some ways able to develop private solutions to the absence of public services, either individually or as a community. However, with larger and more complex services such as healthcare and education, such improvisation cannot be effective as an alternative to provision by government.

5.5 Villagers' views on tribal relationships: Building networks, gaining advantages

In addition to questions relating to participants' relationships with local governments, the household survey included questions about how participants interact with others in their community, and to what extent personal connections influence the political economy. This included questions relating to tribes and clans, and whether participants felt that they are able to form stronger relationships with people who share their tribal or tribal identity, than those who do not. Responses to these questions suggest the social networks and social capitals villagers are able to leverage, in order to seek solutions to the shortcomings of the services and governance structures that are provided by the decentralisation system.

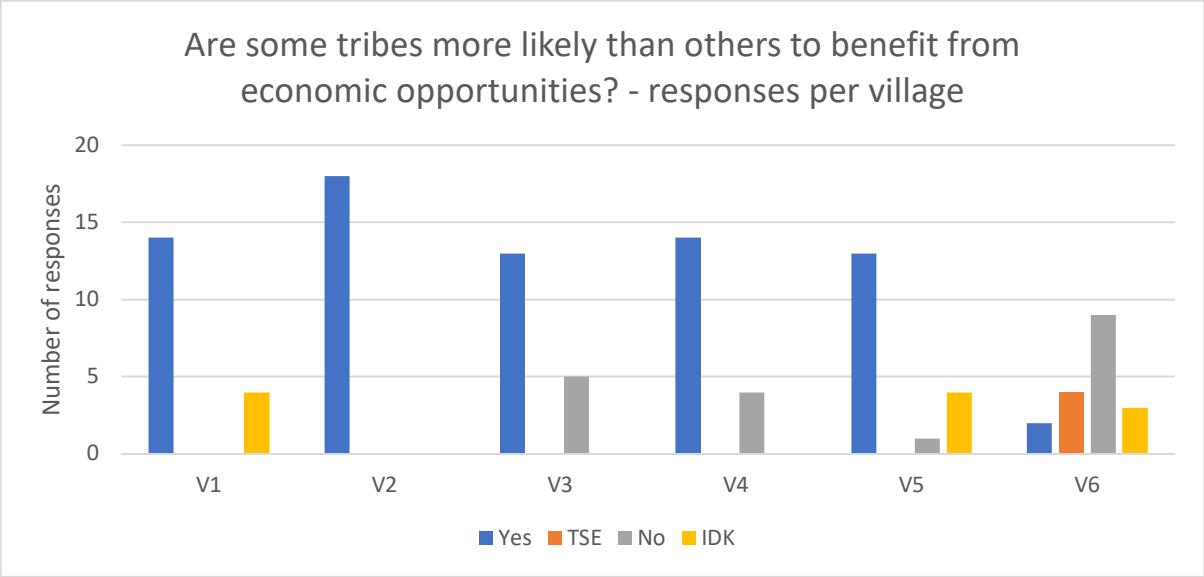
Tribes generating advantages: Economic advantages accruing to some tribal groups

A number of participants in expert interviews conducted for this thesis, as described in Chapter Four, expressed the belief that members of particular tribes, especially those from southwestern Uganda, are more able to access high-status employment opportunities due to their connections to elites within the national and district administrations. Accordingly, participants in the household survey were asked whether, in their opinion, members of specific tribes gain advantages over other tribes in the Ugandan political-economy context. When asked *In your opinion, are some tribal groups in Uganda more likely to benefit from economic opportunities than others?*, 74/108 participants (68 per cent) answered *Yes*, with 19/108 (18 per cent) answering in the negative. Of those who answered *Yes*, 35 (32 per cent) felt that some tribes are favoured over others, 17 (16 per cent) argued that some tribes are better led or work harder than others, and 10 (9 per cent) argued that members of some tribes are better educated than others. These results are indicated in images 5.30 and 5.31 below:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Some tribes favoured	6	8	6	9	6	0
Yes - More educated	5	2	1	2	0	0
Yes - Corruption	1	1	0	1	0	0
Yes - Work/led better	1	7	4	2	2	1
Yes - nothing added	1	0	2	1	5	1
To some extent	0	0	0	0	0	4
No - All are equal	0	0	2	1	1	2
No - Depends on leadership	0	0	1	0	0	0
No - Depends on effort	0	0	2	3	0	3
No - nothing added	0	0	0	0	0	4
IDK	4	1	0	0	4	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	14	17	13	15	13	2
To some extent	0	0	0	0	0	4
No	0	0	5	4	1	9
I don’t know	4	1	0	0	4	4

5.30 Responses to the question ‘In your opinion, are some tribal groups in Uganda more likely to benefit from economic opportunities than others?, per studied site



5.31 Responses to the question 'In your opinion, are some tribal groups in Uganda more likely to benefit from economic opportunities than others?, per studied site

Free-response comments in answer to this question argued that some tribes were better-connected than others:

V2, HH1	Yes, because "They are from the same ethnic group as the president and top leadership"
V1, H1	Yes, because "the top government is dominated by their tribe"
V4, HH4	Yes, because "Employers of particular ethnicity give such opportunities to people of their same ethnicity"

Other respondents argued that some tribes have better-developed work habits than others, and it is from here that their greater economic opportunities arise: "They have better work/economic habits that benefit them".[430] Others argue that rather than better economic opportunities accruing to some tribal groups, better opportunities are held by those with superior levels of productivity: "All ethnic tribes face same problems. Those who get better economic opportunities work hard".[431]

[430] Response to household survey question 80. Household 2, Village 4 (Lira District).
[431] Response to household survey question 80. Household 7, Village 6 (Ntungamo District).

In answering this question, respondents tended to point to the greater favour that some tribes are looked upon than others, with one third of respondents nominating this as the reason they feel some tribes are more likely to benefit from economic opportunity for others. In Pallisa (Villages 1 and 2), respondents also expressed the opinion that some tribes are more educated, or better led, than others, and that this contributes to their economic advantages. Only in Village 6 (Ntungamo) did respondents disagree that some tribes are advantaged over others, arguing that all tribes are equal, or that those who benefit from economic opportunities do so because of their greater effort, rather than because of their tribe. The greater level of economic opportunity of people from western Uganda (including Ntungamo) represents an important context to this question, as those from Village 6 may be less inclined to acknowledge any role for tribal favouritism as contributing to their region's greater levels of economic success.

Tribes generating advantages: Political advantages accruing to some tribal groups

Furthermore, when asked whether some tribal groups have superior access to political opportunities compared to others, respondents were more likely to respond that they believed that tribe does affect access to political positions. In response to the question, *In your opinion, are some tribal groups more likely to hold important political roles than other groups?*, 90/108 respondents (83 per cent) responded *Yes*, and 15/108 (14 per cent) responded *No*. These responses are summarised in images 5.32 and 5.33 below:

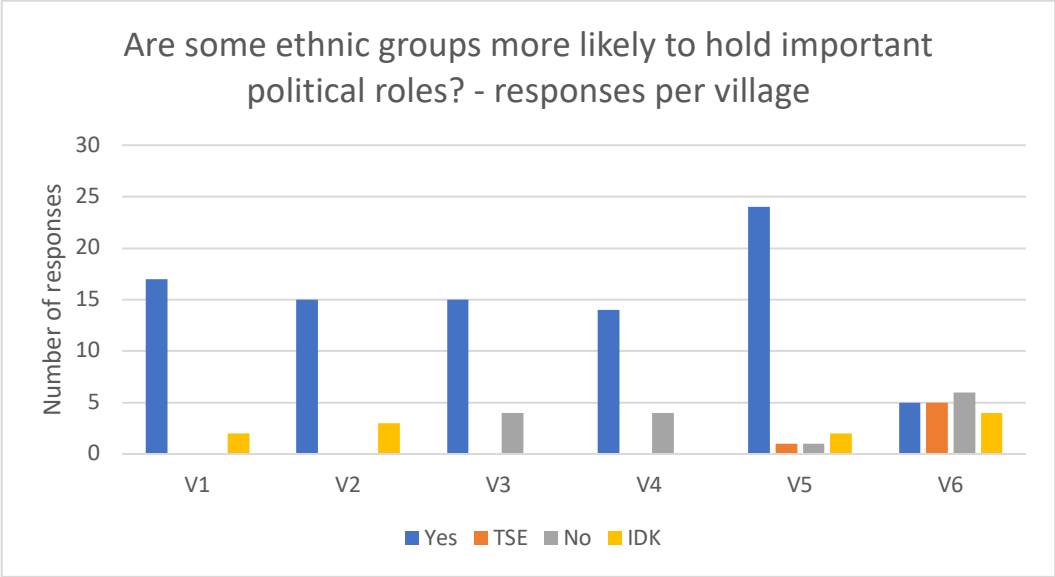
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Some tribes favoured	6	12	10	12	18	4
Yes - More educated	4	1	1	0	0	0
Yes – Better led	2	0	2	0	0	0

Yes - [nothing added]	5	2	2	2	6	1
To some extent	0	0	0	0	1	5
No - All have an equal chance	0	0	3	3	1	5
No - Better educated	0	0	1	1	0	0
No - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	0	1
IDK	2	3	0	0	2	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	17[432]	15	15	14	24	5
To some extent	0	0	0	0	1	5
No	0	0	4	4	1	6
I don't know	2	3	0	0	2	4

5.32 Responses to the question, In your opinion, are some tribal groups more likely to hold important political roles than other groups?, per studied site

[432] Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18



5.33 Responses to the question, In your opinion, are some tribal groups more likely to hold important political roles than other groups?, per studied site

When invited to expand on these answers, 62 of those respondents who had answered *Yes* (57 per cent of all respondents) explained that they feel that some tribes are favoured over others:

V3, HH4	“They are favoured because of the President"
V2, HH5	"There’s a lot of tribalism in that only western region is favoured"
V3, HH8	"It's about who you know not your qualification"
V2, HH1	“They have political connections with the ruling government”

Responses to the question, In your opinion, are some tribal groups more likely to hold important political roles than other groups?

10 respondents (9 per cent) answered in response to this question that they felt some tribes were more able to access high-status political positions because they worked harder than others or were better-educated or better-led. This is in comparison with the 27 respondents who felt this explained the differences between tribe members’ access to economic opportunities, in answer to the previous question. These findings suggest that while participants in the household survey felt that some tribes have better access to economic opportunities than others, they were also mindful of other causal factors than tribe that might contribute to this difference. On the other hand, where there are perceived differences in levels of access to political

positions, participants were more likely to isolate tribe alone as the main contributing factor to this disparity, suggesting that they feel that some tribes are unfairly able to access political positions.

Responses to this question were markedly different in Village 6 (in Ntungamo) than in the other five field sites. In Village 6, 5/18 respondents argued that some tribes are not more able to hold political roles than other tribes, because all tribes have an equal chance to lead. 5/18 argued that it is accurate to some extent, though not fully, to argue that some tribes have more access to political roles than others. A further four argued that some tribes are favoured, while four responded 'I don't know'. The comparatively greater level of political power of people from western Uganda, including Ntungamo, may perhaps contribute to a reluctance amongst some respondents to acknowledge any possible role for favouritism in the levels of political access and power of their tribes over others.

In contrast, respondents in Villages 1-5 argued that it is the case that some tribes are more able to access important political roles than other tribes, with the most common comment being that some tribes are favoured for these roles over others. Four respondents in Village 1 also suggested that some tribes have had better access to education, and so are better able to access political roles for this reason.

On balance, responses to this question suggest that survey participants perceive that some tribes have greater levels of access to political opportunities and roles than others, and that this access is based on tribal identity, rather than on other criteria. This result corresponds with literature described in section 5.1 that suggests than in the Museveni era, political leadership roles have disproportionately accrued to members of tribes from western Uganda.

<u>Tribes as connections: Easier communication, shared goals</u>

As well as establishing connections to opportunities, a shared tribe with a person in a powerful position may facilitate working well with that person. When asked, *Is it important to you that the national MPs for this area are from the same tribe as*

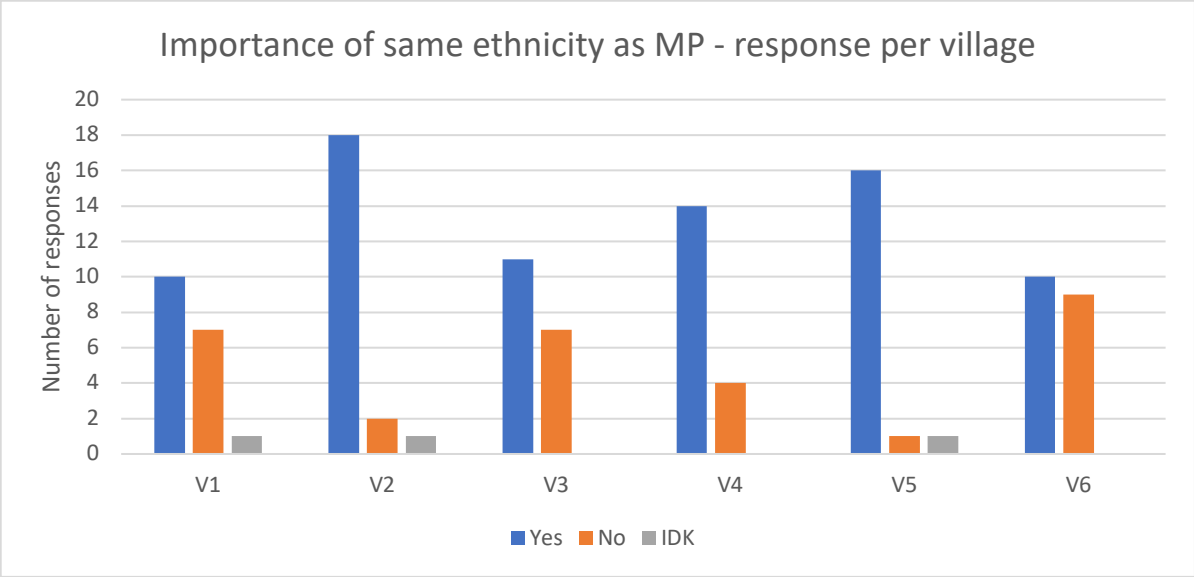
you?, 79/108 (73 per cent) responded that they did think this was important. Reasons for this importance centred on easier communication (47 respondents), and a sense that one of 'their own' would better represent them (29 respondents). Images 5.34 and 5.35 below illustrate the range of responses:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Better communication	6	11	4	8	10	8
Yes – Better representation	4	7	7	6	3	2
Yes - nothing added	0	0	0	0	3	0
No - service more important	6	2	7	4	0	2
No - tribes work together	1	0	0	0	0	7
No - Nothing added	0	0	0	0	1	0
IDK	1	1	0	0	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	10	18[433]	11	14	16	10
No	7	2	7	4	1	9
IDK	1	1	0	0	1	0

5.34 Range of responses to the question, 'Is it important to you that the national MPs for this area are from the same tribe as you?, per studied site

[433] Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18



5.35 Responses to the question, 'Is it important to you that the national MPs for this area are from the same tribe as you?, per studied site

The free-response comments given in answer to this question elaborate on these views:

V2, HH4	Yes, because "He is our own and we hope he might deliver"
V2, HH6	Yes, because "We can easily approach and talk to him using our local language for some of us who are not educated [and so don't speak English]"
V1, HH5	Yes, because "He will also favour us / address out problems since we are of the same ethnic tribe as him"

Responses to the question, 'Is it important to you that the national MPs for this area are from the same tribe as you?

Respondents who had answered *No* to this question explained that the performance of the individual MP was more important than their shared tribe: "As long as he/she can meet the interest of the people at the grassroot".[434]

The responses given by survey participants in response to this question varied from location to location. For most respondents, other than in Village 3, being from the

[434] Response to household survey question 63, household 15, Village 4 (Lira District).

same ethnic tribe is important because it makes communication easier (including in a common language). For respondents in Village 3, it is more important to be from the same tribal group as the local MP because it improves representation, and suggests that the tribe's needs will be better represented in parliament than would be the case if the MP was from a different tribe. However, for just as many respondents in Village 3, and for some respondents in Village 1, it is more important to respondents that their local MP represent their interests successfully, rather than being from the same tribe.

In Village 6 (Ntungamo), respondents were evenly divided between wanting their MP to be from the same tribe as them because this eases communication, and being of the view that people from all tribes can work together successfully. Respondents from Village 6 were virtually the only respondents to put forward this view. Given that Ntungamo is located in western Uganda, the region that tends to dominate in senior parliamentary appointments, respondents may be seeking to argue that the national parliament represents all tribes equally, rather than favouring their community and region. However, this viewpoint was not shared by respondents in Village 5, who argued that it was important for MPs to be from their same tribe in order to facilitate better communication, and to a lesser extent, greater representation.

At first glance, these results would appear to suggest that participants in the household survey prefer in general to engage with members of their own tribe. However, responses to a subsequent question indicate that this outcome may be dependent on context or circumstances. When asked, *When you are working at your job, do you prefer to work with people who are from the same tribe as you?*, 38/108 respondents (35 per cent) answered *Yes*, while 62/108 respondents (57 per cent) answered *No*. While those who answered in the affirmative again cited easier communication and stronger allegiances as reasons for wanting to work with those from the same tribe, those who answered *No* argued that performance and skill is more important. A number of respondents (16/108, or 15 per cent) added that they welcome the opportunity to learn from people who come from different tribal backgrounds. The range of answers to this question is reported in image 5.36 below.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Easier communication	5*	5	1	2	7	6
Yes – We share culture	1	6	0	0	5	0
Sometimes	3	1	1	2	1	0
No - Performance important	4	0	9	7	0	1
No - Tribes are equal	2	2	5	5	0	2
No - Want to work w others	3	4	2	2	0	5
No - nothing added	0	0	0	0	5	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	6	11	1	2	12	6
Sometimes	3	1	1	2	1	0
No	9	6	18	14	5	12

5.36 Responses to the question 'When you are working at your job, do you prefer to work with people who are from the same tribe as you?', per studied site

When contrasted against earlier results, responses to this question suggest that respondents to the household survey prefer that their elected representatives be from the same tribal background as themselves, but in daily life are happy to work with those from other tribal groups. This implies that participants in the household survey perceive that elected leaders will prefer to direct resources or to communicate with people from their own tribal group. Villagers will be able to leverage this shared background as a method for influencing their elected leaders, and in so doing, gain greater access to resources.

The responses that were given in answer to this question varied from one location to the next, with villages even within the same district yielding different responses. In Villages 2 and 5, in Pallisa and in Ntungamo districts respectively, respondents indicate that they prefer to work with others who are from the same ethnic tribe as themselves, because communication is easier and because they share the same culture. However, in the remaining villages, respondents suggested that they not necessarily prefer to work with members of their same tribe, because: tribes are equal; they like to have the experience of working with others; and in particular because they feel that a person's work performance is more important than their tribal identity.

5.6 Community members' views on new districts: Bringing services (even) nearer to the people

Questions were asked of participants in the household survey relating to their opinions on the creation of additional districts in Uganda. These questions revealed a number of results that were apparently contradictory, but nonetheless reveal the ways in which villagers in the studied sites conceptualise the creation of additional districts as an important part of their survival strategies. This sub-section will present results that illustrate the ways in which villagers in the studied households hold complex opinions about the creation of new administrative units, and are able to situate this phenomenon within a broader context relating to gaining access to public services and resources. This sub-section will identify an apparent mechanism that has emerged in the perspective of household-survey respondents: that the creation of additional districts leads to the delivery of improved public services (services are "brought" with a new district), and improved communication between communities and the government. In addition, this section reveals that respondents in the studied sites observe that candidates who promise to deliver newly-created districts are able to achieve this, while electoral candidates who promise improved service delivery are less likely to be believed. The responses presented in this sub-section are consistent across the studied sites, suggesting that respondents in the different regions of Uganda have developed similar conclusions about the role of new-district creation in bringing service delivery 'nearer'.

Participants' reservations regarding new-district creation

Initially, participants in the household survey were asked whether they felt that the number of districts in Uganda 'today'[435] was the correct number of districts. While it is not expected that participants in the household survey would be in possession of a technical or objective answer to this question, this question sought to ascertain the perception of village-level citizens about the rapid proliferation of new districts in Uganda. The goal of this question was not to seek a 'correct' response from participants about the number of districts in Uganda, given the complexities of district

[435] In April 2016

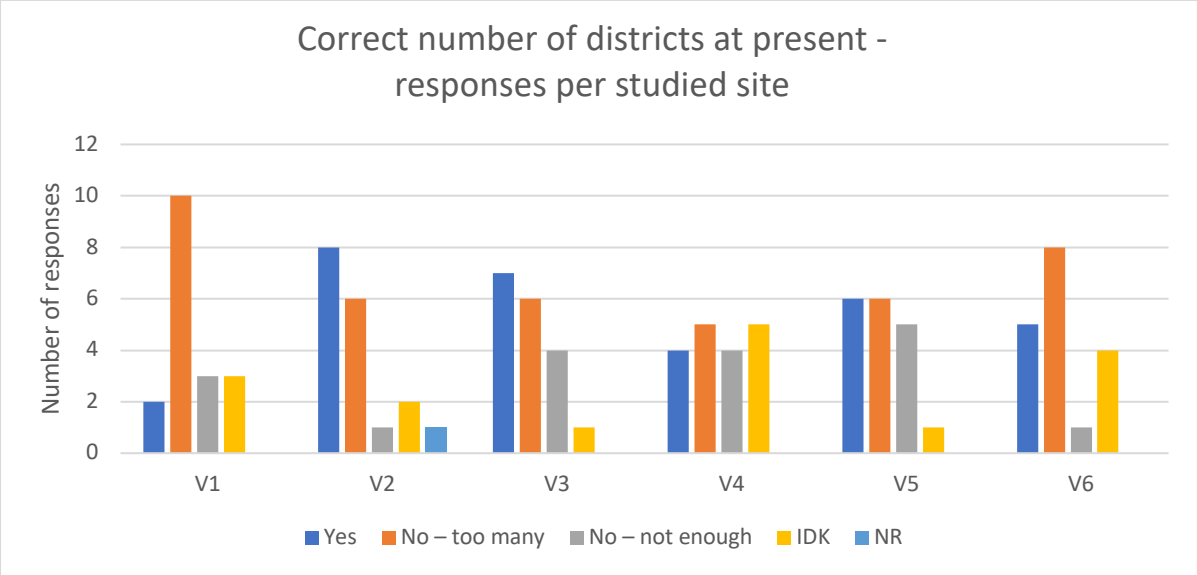
proliferation as a public policy issue. Instead, this question sought to understand respondents' perceptions of whether the phenomenon of creating additional districts should continue, or whether the rapid creation of new districts had resulted in there being too many districts at present – in the perception of the respondent.

In response to the question *In your opinion, do you think there are the correct number of districts in Uganda?*, 41/108 (38 per cent) answered *No – there are too many*, 32/108 respondents (30 per cent) responded *Yes* (i.e. the correct number), and 16/108 (15 per cent) responded *I don't know*. Only 18/108 (17 per cent) answered that they perceived the number of districts in Uganda at present to be too low.[436] These results are summarised in images 5.37 to 5.39 below.

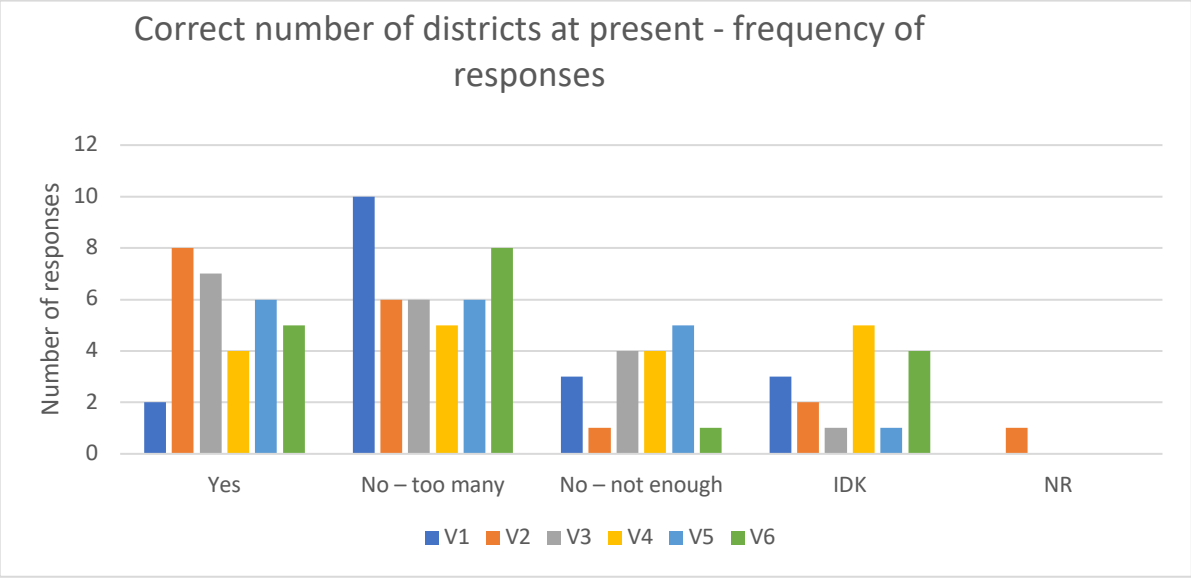
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	2	8	7	4	6	5
No – too many	10	6	6	5	6	8
No – not enough	3	1	4	4	5	1
IDK	3	3	1	5	1	4

5.37 Responses per village of answer to survey participants' perception of the appropriate number of districts in Uganda

[436] A further one respondent gave nil response to this question.



5.38 Responses per village of answer to survey participants' perception of the appropriate number of districts in Uganda



5.39 Responses per category of answer to survey participants' perception of the appropriate number of districts in Uganda

This result suggests that only a minority (17 per cent) of household survey participants feel that there are too few districts in Uganda at present, and so are of the view that additional districts should be created. Responses to this question varied across locations, with a majority of respondents suggesting that they felt Uganda has either the right number of districts now (30 per cent of respondents), or too many (40 per cent). Other than in Village 1 (in Pallisa District) in which 10/18 respondents argued

that they feel there are already too many districts in Uganda, the responses given were consistent across the studied districts.

When asked to explain the rationale for their response, free-text responses suggested that some respondents perceive that too many districts are too poorly resourced to be effective, rather than their overall number being too high. That is, respondents were not concerned that the raw number of districts was either sufficient or too high, but that the districts that have been created more recently are too poorly-resourced to be effective. For example, respondents argued:

V1, HH6	"The more they create more districts, the more the government has to spend on MPs who are doing nothing but are paid highly"
V2, HH17	"Many districts created cannot still give services to people"
V5, HH13	"Too many districts also delay service delivery."

These responses were expressed consistently across all districts, including in Pallisa, where an additional district has subsequently been created.

Advantages of district proliferation: New districts and bringing services to the village

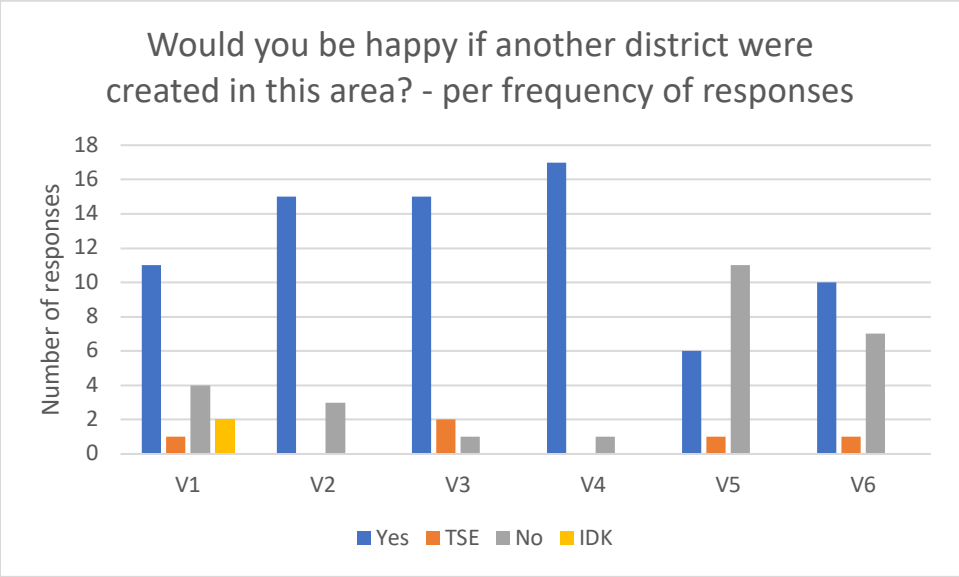
In contrast to the results described above, when directly questioned about whether they perceive benefits to accrue from creating additional districts, respondents answered that they would respond favourably to a new district being created nearby to where they live. In response to the question, *Would you be happy if another district was created in this area?*, 74/108 respondents, or 69 per cent, responded *Yes*, and 27/108 (25 per cent) answered *No*. These responses are summarised below in image 5.40 and 5.41.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Current district is far	2	2	2	0	0	1
Yes - Brings services/devt	5	7	6	8	3	5
Yes - Creates jobs	4	4	4	5	2	2
Yes - Other areas have one	0	1	0	1	0	0
Yes - Population growing	0	0	1	2	0	0
Yes - Better market access	0	0	1	0	0	0
Yes - Distributes resources	0	0	1	1	0	0
Yes - No longer oppressed	0	1	0	0	0	0

Yes - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	2
TSE: Depends on population	1	0	4	1	1	1
No - Districts are expensive	1	2	0	0	1	0
No - Services not improve	1	1	0	1	1	1
No - Not too large now	0	0	0	0	5	5
No - I do not benefit	2	0	1	1	0	0
No - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	4	1
IDK	3	0	0	1	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	11	15	15	17	6	10
To some extent	1	0	2	0	1	1
No	4	3	1	1	11	7
I don’t know	2	0	0	0	0	0

5.40 Responses per field site regarding perceptions of new-village creation



5.41 Responses per field site regarding perceptions of new-village creation

When invited to expand upon their answer, respondents who had answered *Yes* further explained that they would welcome a new district as it brings new services and development (34/108 respondents, 31 per cent), creates jobs (21/108 respondents, 19 per cent) or because the current district's headquarters are located far away (7/108 respondents, 6 per cent). In free-text answers, respondents added:

V6, HH1	Yes, because "It can lead to development to our village"
V2, HH5	Yes, because "I can foot [walk] up to there because right now, it's so distance [*sic*] from us"
V3, HH8	Yes, because "For adequate distribution of resources to the grassroot people"
V1, HH7	Yes, because "there will be employment opportunities"
V1, HH1	Yes, because "services will be brought nearer to people"
V2, HH9	Yes, because "we have limited services provided by the district"

Those who answered *No* did not feel that the creation of new districts would be successful in drawing benefits or resources downwards to the grassroot level: "The more they create more districts, the more the government has to spend on MPs who are doing nothing but are paid highly".[437]

[437] Response to household survey question 87. Household 6, Village 1 (Pallisa District).

These results suggest that when respondents to the household survey are asked about the creation of hypothetical additional districts, they do not feel that Uganda needs more districts, or already has too many. However, when asked about the creation of a new district specifically in the area in which they live, respondents are more likely to argue that the creation of a new district brings with it new services and new employment opportunities to their own area, and are therefore more likely to support the creation of a new district specifically where they live. It is important to note that households have a clear expectation that the creation of a new district leads to the establishment of *new* public services ("services will be brought") closer to where they live. This suggests that respondents in the studied sites perceive (though this perception may not be accurate) that the creation of new districts can potentially generate the supply of new public services.

The responses to this question suggest that in the studied sites, villagers do not perceive current levels of service delivery and employment opportunities to be sufficient, and perceive that they would be improved by the creation of a new, smaller, nearer district. This outcome is significant, as it implies that decentralisation has not yet succeeded in bringing improved services and development to the studied sites. Furthermore, according to the survey participants, this situation would be improved through the intensification of decentralisation: the creation of additional districts. The implications of this perception – that the creation of a new district leads to new services being established – are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

Responses to this question were reasonably consistent across the studied sites, with the exception of Village 5 (in Ntungamo District). For Villages 1-4 and 6, respondents tended to suggest that they would be happy if a new district were established in their area. Explanatory comments focused on respondents' belief that the creation of additional districts brings with it improved services and development, and improved access to jobs. Notably, in the free comments, many villagers expressed the view that the creation of a new district brings development itself nearer to the village. However, in Village 5 in Ntungamo District, respondents in the studied site held differing views. In this village, respondents commented that they did not feel their district is too large at the moment, despite Ntungamo in fact being one of Uganda's

largest districts (partly due to the rapid proliferation of districts in other areas). This potentially relates to the higher levels of economic activity and service delivery that tend to be present in western Uganda, where Village 5 is located, meaning that there is less demand for the services and development that new districts are perceived to bring.

New districts and service delivery

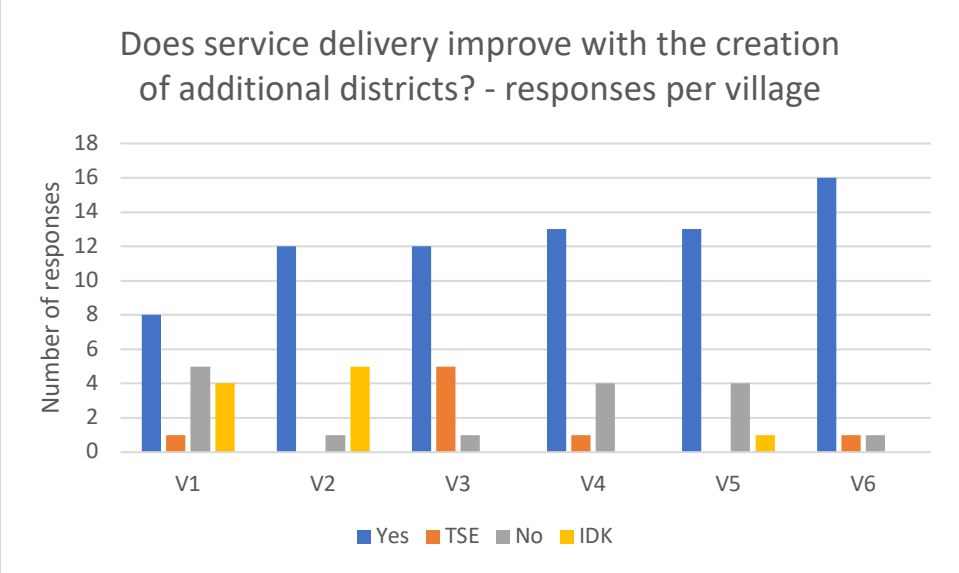
When asked, *Do you think the creation of new districts makes service delivery better?*, 74/108 (69 per cent) of respondents answered *Yes*, of whom 50 added that the creation of additional districts makes services better and/or brings services nearer. These answers are summarised in images 5.42 and 5.53 below.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Services nearer/better	4	10	10	10	8	8
Yes - Creates jobs	1	1	2	3	0	1
Yes - Government nearer	2	1	0	0	0	1
Yes - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	5	6
TSE - Services may improve	1	0	5	1	0	1
No - Districts perform poorly	2	1	1	2	2	1
No - Services not improve	2	0	0	2	1	0
No - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	1	0

IDK	4	6	0	1	1	2

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	8	12	12	13	13	16
To some extent	1	0	5	1	0	1
No	5	1	1	4	4	1
I don't know	4	6	0	1	1	2

5.42 Responses per village regarding whether service delivery is improved following the creation of an additional district



5.43 Responses per village regarding whether service delivery is improved following the creation of an additional district

Free-text answers to this same question included:

V6, HH1	Yes, because "There will [be] creation of more services like hospitals, school and many others"
V4, HH2	Yes, because "They lead to developmental activities"

V1, HH4	Yes, because "When a district is created, there's a possibility that a referral hospital will be built and good roads will be constructed"
V1, HH1, HH2, HH7, HH10	Yes, because "services are brought nearer."
V4, HH5	Yes, because "sufficient services which were previously lacking are brought closer to the people"
V6, HH8	Yes, because "People get more leaders who are closer to them, new hospitals, schools are put in place."

Responses to question, 'Do you think the creation of new districts makes service delivery better?'

In Villages 1 and 2 (Pallisa District) some respondents expressed more uncertainty about whether the creation of a new district generates improved service delivery, with 10/36 respondents answering "I don't know". In Village 3, in Lira District, 5/18 respondents were not confident that services would definitely improve following the creation of an additional district, with 5/18 respondents answering "To some extent; services may improve". 16/108 respondents (15 per cent) were of the opinion that the creation of an additional district would not improve service delivery, with several respondents highlighting the poor performance of districts as being a cause of poor services, rather than the number or size of districts.

Those who answered *No* to this question explained:

V1, HH14	No, because "Some districts may not [have] resources to extend services to people"
V1, HH3	No, because "If they cannot provide for the available districts, how can they provide for the many they will create?"
V2, HH17	No, because "Districts can be created but may not be functioning well"

Responses to question, 'Do you think the creation of new districts makes service delivery better?'

Responses to this question, among both those who answered in the affirmative and in the negative, indicate that villagers have accepted and have begun to use for themselves the argument that the creation of an additional district should lead to improved service delivery. In response to this question, survey participants reported that in general, and across each studied site, they are of the opinion that the creation of a new district makes service delivery better. For a majority of respondents, the creation of an additional district improves service delivery by bringing services nearer to the village, or improving the quality of services. Those who answered *No* to this question did so not because they do not accept this argument, but because they do not believe districts are always sufficiently well-resourced to achieve this goal; they do nonetheless accept that improved service delivery is the goal of creating additional districts.

This result is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests that respondents to the household-level survey have absorbed and accepted the national government's rationale for decentralisation: that transferring service delivery to the district level brings services and government 'nearer to the people'. This should result in improvements to the quality of services and the accessibility and responsiveness of government. But furthermore, a second rationale also emerges from these results. Not only do respondents to the survey agree that decentralisation brings resources nearer to them, but the creation of *new* districts brings resources *even nearer* to them. That is, as well as accepting the rationale for decentralisation itself, household-survey respondents suggest that they would welcome the creation of additional districts in their area. Their perception is that the creation of a new district will be effective in improving the quality of public services and the responsiveness of government.[438] Moving beyond simply accepting decentralisation as a process of governance, household-survey respondents have come to identify the creation of new districts as a mechanism for gaining access to improved services and communication with government.

[438] This perception held by respondents – that the creation of a new district will "bring" services nearer to the population – may not be an accurate perception. New districts may not in fact achieve improvements to service delivery, due to the higher administrative cost of creating a new district. For example, expenditure on the wage bill of new officials may crowd out expenditure on new service. The implications of this result are discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

New districts and government communication

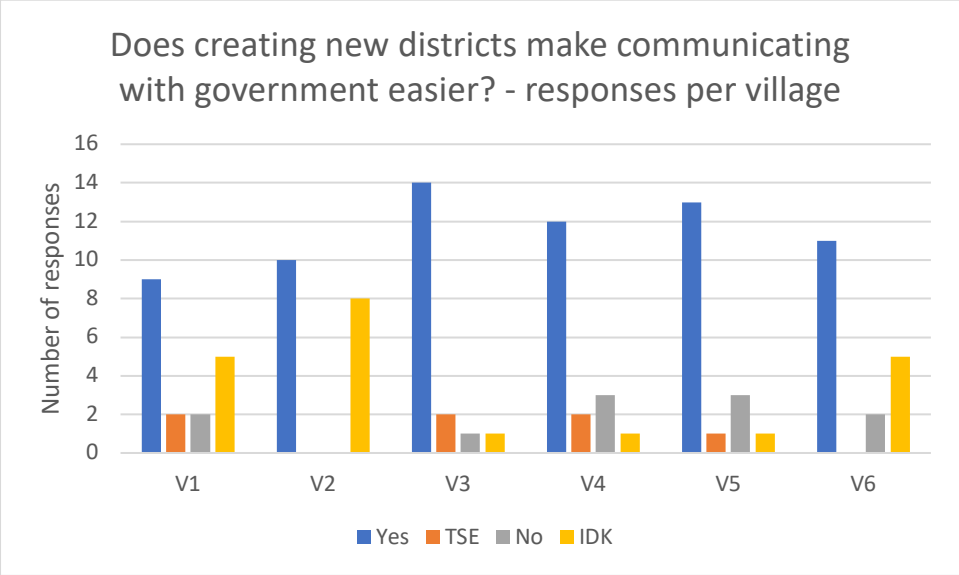
A second question sought to investigate whether respondents to the household survey also accept the second rationale made in favour of creating additional districts: that it improves communication between citizens and the government. When asked, *Do you think the creation of more districts makes it easier for you to communicate with government?*, 69/108 (64 per cent) of respondents answered *Yes*, and 11/108 (10 per cent) answered *No*. A further 21/108 (19 per cent) responded *I don't know*. These results are summarised in images 5.44 and 5.45 below.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Access/comms easier	7	10	7	7	8	5
Yes - Leaders will be locals	0	0	3	4	0	0
Yes - Population smaller	1	0	3	1	0	0
Yes - Monitoring easier	0	0	1	0	0	0
Yes - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	5	6
TSE – Effort/capacity	2	0	2	2	0	0
TSE - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	0
No - Leaders never communicate	0	1	3	3	2	2
No - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	0	0

IDK	6	7	1	1	2	5

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	9	10	14*	12	13	11
To some extent	2	0	2	2	1	0
No	1	1	4	3	2	2
I don't know	6	7	1	1	2	5

5.44 Responses per field site regarding whether the creation of an additional district facilitates communication between government and citizens



5.45 Responses per field site regarding whether the creation of an additional district facilitates communication between government and citizens

In free-text responses in answer to this question, respondents who answered *Yes* explained:

V6, HH8	Yes, because "People can easily access their leader for communication, since MPs, LCs now come from nearer them"
V3, HH7	Yes, because "It is easy for government to manage small group"

V3, HH12	Yes, because "The voice of the people can be heard quickly because the fewer the people the easier to decide on their pressing needs"

Responses to question, 'Do you think the creation of more districts makes it easier for you to communicate with government?'

On the other hand, of the 11 respondents who answered *No*, 10 indicated that this was because they thought leaders would not communicate with them regardless of their proximity:

V4, HH16	No, because "People's complaints at the grass root don't reach the government"
V4, HH6	No, because "People's voices are not heard even when districts are few"
V5, HH1	No, because "I have never communicated to the government through the districts"

Responses to question, 'Do you think the creation of more districts makes it easier for you to communicate with government?'

For these respondents, issues that cause poor communication and consultation between the government and citizens are due to factors other than the proximity or nearness of government offices, such as poor responsiveness of districts. For this reason, the creation of an additional district will not mitigate these communication barriers.

Overall, for the majority of respondents, across each of the studied sites, the creation of additional districts is thought to make communication with government officials easier, with respondents answering that accessing and communicating with officials is easier with the creation of new districts. In Villages 3 and 4 (Lira District), respondents also reported that the creation of an additional district means that leaders are more likely to be members of the local community, making communication easier. However, in Villages 1 and 2 (Pallisa), 13/36 respondents (36 per cent) were unsure whether the creation of a new district makes communicating with leaders easier, answering 'I don't know' in response to this question.

District proliferation as a mechanism for achieving services and governance

The results described in this sub-section indicate that for respondents to the household survey, the rationales that are generally said to underpin decentralisation itself – that decentralisation brings services and resources nearer to the population, and facilitates interaction with government – is made more powerful by the creation of additional districts. The creation of additional, smaller districts is perceived to result in services being brought yet nearer to the village level, with household-survey respondents accordingly reporting that they perceive that the creation of new districts 'brings' development to the village level. Respondents to the survey have adopted and internalised the same rationales for creating new districts as those rationales that are given by the central government. Those are: that the creation of a new district brings services even nearer to the village than their current district does, and makes communication with government easier by further reducing the geographical space between citizens and officers of the government. There is not a separate rationale given to explain creating an *additional* district compared to implementing decentralisation itself, other than the description of a particular district as 'too large'; it is then necessary for it to be divided into smaller districts for the benefits of decentralisation to be captured by a specific population.

Furthermore, the responses given by household-survey participants suggest that they have taken this rationale further than simply accepting the rationale of the central government, relating to the benefits of decentralisation. Instead, household-survey respondents suggested that their rationale has extended further, and they now view the creation of an additional district as being a mechanism for improving service delivery and improving communication with government. The rationale revealed by responses to the household survey suggest that respondents have drawn a connection between the creation of a new district and the improvement of services and government responsiveness. By actively *seeking* the creation of an additional district,[439] therefore, voters can elect leaders who commit to delivering additional

[439] Examples of communities that have lobbied their District Council or MP for the creation of a new sub-national unit are given in section 6.6.

districts, in the belief that this will improve the quality and reach of services in their local area.

In addition, responses to this question indicate a third outcome. That is, according to the responses given by participants in the survey, district creation has become something of a proxy for development itself: the creation of a new district means that services and development will be brought nearer to the village. Responses state that a new district “brings development” to a particular village, suggesting that respondents have come to view the creation of a new district as analogous to development itself. By ‘bringing’ services and resources to a new location, the creation of additional districts contributes to development itself at the village level. The creation of an additional district as means for bringing services and resources nearer to their location, is indistinguishable to the process of development. The significance of this result will be discussed in greater detail in section 7.3.

New districts and political objectives: Election candidates promise to create districts

Given that the majority of participants in the household survey reported that they would welcome the creation of a new district in their area, questions were included in the household survey to ascertain the extent to which election candidates attempt to leverage this preference for their own political advantage. As described in section 5.3, in response to the question, *Did the election candidates promise that they would being anything to the village if they were elected?*, respondents nominated a range of public services, such as healthcare and water. These results are presented in table 5.25 below.

In the two studied sites in Pallisa District, 6/36 (17 per cent in those two sites) of respondents also noted that election candidates had committed to delivering a new district in the area. This is significant in light of the subsequent creation of a new district in Pallisa, to be called Butebo District.[440] Parliament convened to vote on the creation of new districts in 2015 (in the lead-up to the 2016 election), confirming the creation of Butebo District, which came into effect on 1 July 2017.

In addition to committing to creating new districts, respondents described election candidates who committed to delivering a range of public services in the studied sites if they were subsequently elected. This could be argued to represent a tacit acknowledgement by election candidates that these services are not currently being adequately provided, either in number or in quality. By committing to increase the quality and reach of services, knowing that this is a continuing development priority of the community, election candidates hope to gain the support of voters in a given electorate. Image 5.46 below presents responses to this question.

[440] In 2010 Museveni had announced that Butebo County would be elevated to a district (in effect removing it from Pallisa), in accordance with popular demand; however, by the time of the 2011 election, the district had not been created. See: 'President Grants Butebo County a District Status'.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, namely:						
Electricity	3	0	0	2	8	7
Services (general)	5	2	2	5	2	2
Agriculture	1	0	5	7	1	1
Water	1	6	3	6	3	7
Roads	4	8	7	7	5	5
School	3	4	2	11	3	0
Healthcare	3	9	2	5	1	4
District/sub-county	4	2	0	0	0	0
“Yes”	0	0	1	0	6	6
No	0	0	0	0	0	0
n/a	1	0	0	0	0	0
IDK	0	1	5	1	0	0

5.46 Responses to the question, ‘Did the election candidates promise that they would being anything to the village if they were elected?’, per studied site

This question reveals that electoral candidates promise to communities that they will bring specific new amenities to specific locations, depending on the major concerns of voters in these locations. In Pallisa, candidates suggested they would deliver a new district, as well as improved services such as education and healthcare. In Lira, candidates focus on agriculture, water and roads. In Ntungamo, where households are engaged in commercial farming to a greater degree than in other locations in Uganda, candidates commit to providing electricity services, and to improving roads.

However, when then asked, *Do you expect that they will deliver these things?*, 72/108 respondents (66 per cent) responded either *No* or *I don’t know*. The responses to this question per field site are presented in image 5.47:

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	1	2	0	4	6	2
To some extent	2	4	2	4	2	2
No	6	8	10	4	4	4
n/a	1	0	3	1	0	0
IDK	8	4	3	5	6	10

5.47 Responses to question 'Do you expect that they will deliver these things?', per studied site

As noted in section 5.3, respondents did not expect that electoral candidates would meet the commitments they had made, explaining:

V3, HH1	No, because "They just talk but they don't implement"
V3, HH9	No, because "Campaign is just for getting in position of leadership. They promise but do not deliver"
V4, HH16	No, because "They just talk because they want votes"

These results suggest that villagers in the studied communities do not expect that improved public services will be delivered by election candidates. Responses to this question suggest that survey respondents are wary of election candidates' ability or genuine intention to deliver the changes they promise, with a majority of respondents answering that they do not think, or do not know whether, candidates will deliver on their commitments. This result was broadly consistent across each of the six studied sites.

However, when election candidates committed to delivering a new district in Pallisa, this commitment *was* in fact delivered, with Butebo District being created and split from Pallisa. That is, when election candidates committed to delivering a new district, this was delivered in reality. When combined with villagers' understanding that

the delivery of a new district will mean that improvements to public services will be generated or "brought", as described in the preceding section 5.5, these results suggest that villagers are likely to associate improvements to public services with the creation of additional districts. In short, when politicians promise to deliver new services, households are disbelieving; but there is evidence that a promised new district will in fact be created, and that services may be created ("brought") to the area afterwards.

These results help to explain the comments of respondents as reported in the previous section, that the creation of additional districts "brings development" to the community. From the perspective of villagers in the studied site, the commitment of government that is most likely to be delivered by elected officials is a new district, and then after a new district is created, survey participants believe that this will in turn generate improvements to public service delivery. Survey participants remain sceptical about election candidates' commitments to deliver improved public services, but when a district is promised, villagers can observe that it is then delivered. Survey respondents further perceive that once a new district is created, they believe that new services will be "brought" to the community afterwards. We therefore see a mechanism emerge from the perspective of survey participants: election candidates promise to deliver a new district, which is then in fact delivered, which is then assumed or perceived by villagers in the studied sites to bring new employment opportunities and new services to the area. This is a striking comparison to election candidates who commit to delivering improved public services, but then following an election, little perceptible change takes place – with the result that survey participants report disbelief and scepticism of candidates who make these commitments. The significance of this result will be further analysed in section 6.6.

5.7 Summary of survey outcomes: Poor services, low participation, new districts

The results from the household survey from six villages in Uganda draw attention to some of the weaknesses of the delivery of decentralisation in the Ugandan context. For these 108 households, their daily experience of decentralised governance differs from the theoretical rationales of decentralised governance in several important ways, particularly relating to participation, consultation, complaint-making, and responsiveness. Participants in the survey report that they are reluctant to draw attention to faults or flaws in public service delivery, as doing so does not generate a possible response from government agents – and can draw negative attention to themselves. Participants report that planning meetings in the studied villages are not always open to all members of the village: instead, specific villagers are invited to participate, or social barriers such as illiteracy prevent active participation. Relatedly, the perception of survey respondents is that the development priorities of the village are determined at higher levels of governance than the village. Villagers in the studied sites report that they do not always feel consulted on the development of village workplans or budgets; in particular, they do not feel that the national budget has been inclusive of their views.

Importantly, participants raised a number of concerns about the quality and accessibility of public services in their village, and also revealed households' preferences regarding service delivery. Participants reported frequent instances of drug stock-outs, reported that medical care was sometimes unaffordable, and reported that school fees are frequently burdensome – to the extent that children are held back from school until fees can be paid. Few households were observed to have access to a water point, and none was seen to have access to government-provided electricity. Villagers reported a range of strategies for adapting to the absence of public utilities, such as obtaining private, household-level solar panels. Households also trade in valuable assets, such as goats, as a store of wealth that can be converted to liquidity when needed, as a strategy for managing their exclusion from formal financial markets. In small ways, villagers in the studied sites are able to find private solutions to the failures in public services, though they recognise that there are flaws in the provision of larger services such as health, education and infrastructure.

Complexities were also revealed regarding participants' perceptions of the responsiveness of government. For those households who view the role of government as providing small items, such as livestock or a solar panel, their answers to questions regarding the responsiveness of government to local development priorities was more likely to be positive. Others, who see a role for government in the provision of sector-level services (and where these services are poor-quality), are less likely to report that government has been responsive to the village's development needs. Regarding tribal groups, participants in the survey feel that on balance, some tribes are able to access political and economic advantages to a greater extent than others. While participants felt it was important that their elected representatives were from the same tribe as them, in daily life, they are less concerned about the tribal identity of trading partners or other business relationships. This suggests that villagers in the studied sites perceive that elected leaders tend to favour their own tribal group in the allocation of resources, or that there are ways in which this tribal connection can be leveraged by villagers in an advantageous manner.

Responses to survey questions relating to district proliferation revealed a degree of complexity in villagers' opinions. Initially, respondents generally argued that there are a sufficient, or even excessive, number of districts in Uganda at present. However, participants then agreed that they would be happy if a new district were created in their immediate area. In free-text answers that expanded on these responses, villagers in the studied sites explained that the creation of new districts near to them would bring public services nearer, and facilitate communication with government. In this sense, the rationales for creating new districts are the same as those for decentralisation itself; there is not a distinct rationale for the creation of additional districts. These findings suggest that villagers would prefer decentralisation to be implemented with greater intensity than is currently the case, with and expansion in the number of districts in respondents' own communities. That is, decentralisation has not yet succeeded in delivering high-quality services to the studied communities; villagers have not realised the benefits of development itself. Accordingly, their

preference is for decentralisation to be implemented more intensively: for an additional district to be created where they live.[441]

Relatedly, villagers explained the ways in which candidates for election to political roles promise to deliver improved services to the village, but these promises are regarded with scepticism. Villagers in the studied sites argue that these promises are simply made in exchange for votes, but are not delivered after the election. In contrast, participants instead perceive that the creation of an additional district or lower administrative unit will "bring" services nearer to them, and is a more reliable mechanism that formal channels in delivering improvements in service delivery and governance.

These issues illustrate the ways in which the interaction between decentralisation and the political economy in Uganda have generated results that diverge from the theories and rationales underpinning decentralisation. Rather than being able to participate in the governance process, villagers in the six field sites report that their elected leaders rarely communicate with them, other than in the lead-up to elections. Rather than the results of planning processes being based on the views of the grassroot, high-level planning priorities dominate, and the outcomes of planning are in fact top-down. Results from the collected data also reveal that from the perspective of the grassroot, despite the promise of decentralisation delivering improved service delivery and more responsive governments, in fact little in daily life has changed. Villagers in the studied sites have developed a range of private survival strategies in an attempt to mitigate the effects of poor service delivery, and at other times are forced to go without adequate services.

[441] The intersection of these preferences with those of elected leaders and elites will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

5.8 Comparing and contrasting the experiences of different field sites

The household survey was conducted in six field sites in three districts, and the results of the survey generate insights into the different challenges and priorities facing respondents in these three districts. These different priorities are in turn reflected in respondents' statements on which public policy changes they would prefer to be enacted, including regarding the creation of additional districts. Given the substantial economic, political, social and geographical differences between Uganda's three regions, as discussed in section 5.1 of this chapter, the results of the household survey might have been expected to vary widely across the three represented regions. However, the results from the household survey in fact contain some striking similarities across the three studied districts. The differences in the societies, economies and geographies of the three studied districts have had a smaller impact than was expected on the survey results at the village level, other than the differences that are described in this section.

Respondents in each site reported that they experience problems in accessing public services (either due to the cost of the service or its absence), that they do not feel fully engaged with local-level planning and budgeting, and that they utilise a number of strategies for managing the absence of public services. In addition, respondents across the six studied sites broadly agreed that they would be happy if a new district were created in the region in which they live, that they perceive that the creation of a new district would "bring" service delivery and employment opportunities nearer to where they live, and that they prefer that their elected representatives be members of their own tribe. Furthermore, responses from the household survey highlight that respondents feel sceptical about claims made by election candidates that they will deliver improved services to the village if they are elected; on the other hand, after politicians commit to creating a new district in a particular location, a new district is then delivered.

These results are significant because they point to the underlying motivations that might drive these studied communities to advocate for the creation of additional

districts. Having experienced poor-quality, absent, or unaffordable services, and faced with politicians who commit to improvements but do not deliver them, respondents describe the creation of additional districts as a potential avenue or strategy for pursuing the delivery of new services, employment opportunities, and even improved development itself. The implications of these findings will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 6 and 7.

Summary of findings from Pallisa District

The survey outcomes from Village 1 and Village 2, located in Pallisa District in eastern Uganda, reflect the ethnic diversity in this district, and a lower level of engagement between participants and local-level planning and participation mechanisms. Participants in the household survey were the least likely of all respondents to report that they regularly attend the village's planning meetings, and the least likely to report that they have ever met an MP. This suggests an elevated level of disengagement from communication with government agents, from both the respondents and from their elected representatives. In addition, these two sites recorded higher cultural diversity than the other four sites, with not all respondents being from one tribal group. Some Village 1 and Village 2 respondents also stated that their local MPs and their LC5 councillors were not from the same tribal background as themselves, though conversely, they were also more likely than other respondents to report that they placed a high level of importance on their representatives being from their same tribal group. That is, participants in the household survey reported that they currently are not represented by people from their own tribe, even though this is something they would prefer. This suggests implications for the creation of districts that coincide with social delineations, as will be discussed in more detail in chapters 7 and 8.

Survey participants from Pallisa District, and in particular from Village 1, were the least likely to be persuaded that the creation of a new district will necessarily improve service delivery or communication with government, with 4/18 and 6/18 respondents answering 'I don't know' to these questions, respectively, in Village 1.

Nonetheless, respondents in Village 1 and Village 2 responded that they would be 'happy' if a new district were created near to where they live, with 26/36 respondents answering in the affirmative to this question across the two studied villages. Finally, some Village 1 and Village 2 respondents also reported that electoral candidates who visited their villages in the lead-up to the 2016 elections promised that if elected they would implement the creation of a new district in Pallisa. This was indeed implemented, with Butebo District splitting from Pallisa following the 2016 election.

Summary of findings from Lira District

Responses to the household survey from participants in Village 3 and Village 4, located in Lira District, reflect the greater level of poverty affecting residents of northern Uganda. Respondents in this district were the most likely respondents to report that there were households in their village that were living in poverty, and that this poverty could be identified by household members lacking adequate food. One respondent reported that their household owns no assets at all, including a mattress or a kerosene lantern. Participants in the survey from these two districts were also most likely to respond that their home was constructed from naturally-occurring materials, such as mud and sticks, compared to metal or bricks. Most respondents in Village 4 reported that the village does not have access to a primary school, which was reflected in their reports that visiting electoral candidates promised to deliver a school to the village if elected. Respondents in this village were also the most likely of all participants to report that they have in the past been unable to afford medical treatment, or that they have been unable to afford to pay their children's school fees.

In addition, respondents in these two villages were the least likely of all participants to answer that they believe the government has addressed the development needs of their village, and the most likely to report that they believe that public services in their village are provided by NGOs. The higher level of poverty and poorer standard of service delivery in northern regions is reflected in respondents' answers to questions regarding service affordability, accessibility and quality, as well as in their answers regarding the creation of additional districts. A substantial majority

of respondents in these two villages reported that they would be 'happy' if a new district were created in the area in which they live. A majority of respondents also responded that they perceive that a new district would generate improved service delivery and improved communication with government if it were created.

Summary of findings from Ntungamo District

Village 5 and Village 6 are located in Ntungamo District, in the west of Uganda, an area which tends to experience greater levels of economic activity and more developed agriculture than other regions. As might be expected given the higher levels of economic development in this region, responses given by survey participants in these villages suggest that villagers experience lower poverty levels than respondents in Pallisa or Lira Districts. Villagers in the two Ntungamo sites were the most likely to nominate the main development priorities of the village as income-generating agricultural activity, such as growing cash crops. These participants reported with the greatest frequency that their homes are constructed from non-natural materials, such as corrugated iron. Respondents in these two sites were the most likely to expect that election candidates would implement the services they had promised to deliver if they were elected, and the most likely to perceive that the government had addressed the development priorities of their community.

Respondents in these two sites reported with the greatest frequency that they are personally acquainted with someone who works in the national public service or national parliament, and are the most likely to state that they believe that public services in their village are delivered by the national government (rather than the district government). In spite of this, respondents in these two sites were the least likely to answer that they believe some tribal groups are favoured over others in terms of access to economic or political opportunities.

However, even though the survey responses given by participants in Village 5 and 6 point to a greater level of economic opportunity and lower level of poverty in Ntungamo, participants nonetheless expressed concerns with the quality and availability of public services, and reported that government representatives were not

responsive to complaints or feedback from community members. Furthermore, survey participants in these two villages expressed strong preferences regarding the creation of additional districts. A majority of respondents in both villages reported that they perceive that service delivery and communication with government would both improve if a new district were created in the area in which they live. In Village 5, uniquely amongst all the studied villages, did participants express ambivalence about the creation of new districts, with 11/18 indicating that they would not be happy if a new district were created locally. In expanding on this answer, respondents suggested that their local area was sparsely populated, and so a new district was not required. A majority of respondents in Village 6, however, reported that they would be ‘happy’ if a new district were created in the area in which they live, arguing that the creation of a new district can be expected to bring services, jobs and ‘development’ to the village.

5.9 Chapter conclusion: Grassroot strategies for institutions, markets and social capital

This chapter has discussed the viewpoints of some village-level residents of six studied field sites within three regions of Uganda, and has revealed the perspectives of these household members on service delivery, governance, decentralisation and district proliferation. The survey sought to examine the alignment between the assumptions underpinning decentralisation policy – that it is able to generate improved service delivery and more responsive, communicative government – and the experience of residents of the village level. Questions examined the extent to which village members in the six studied sites feel that they are indeed able to hold local-government officials to account for the delivery of high-quality services, and how responsive and communicative local governments are to their communities.

The results of the survey suggest that for survey participants across the six sites, the promise of decentralisation has not as yet been realised. Services remain of poor quality, sometimes inaccessible due to service fees, and sometimes not available at all. Participation in decision-making and bottom-up planning is inconsistent, including within some villages, and government representatives have not responded adequately to community members' complaints about the standard of services. Furthermore, participants in the household survey described their strategies for gaining access to resources in the absence of well-performing state systems and institutions, which involve the strategic use of institutions, markets and social capital. Firstly, villagers describe the market-based solutions they attempt to undertake to address the shortcomings of decentralised service delivery. Where possible, villagers seek private, individual solutions to the absence of services and utilities, such as using solar panels in the absence of an electricity network. However, these household-level strategies cannot extend to finding private market solutions to address the absence of larger-scale services, such as education. Secondly, villagers seek solutions to poorly-performing decentralisation institutions through the use of social capital and interpersonal relationships. These include the leveraging of personal connections to elites, or the use of tribal identities as the basis for claims on resources.

In this context, the creation of additional districts is revealed to be consistent with these household-level strategies for gaining access to services and networks. While households in the studied sites report that they have already become adept at drawing on social capital and networks to obtain improved employment opportunities or to lobby for improved services, the creation of additional districts transforms these strategies from the household level to the community level. The establishment of a new district, which brings the site of government decision-making even nearer to the community, further enables respondents' existing strategies for obtaining services and leveraging networks. When the physical distance between communities and the site of government are reduced, villagers are able to create and leverage networks with local leaders more easily, and there is a greater probability that the leaders of a new district will be from their same tribal group (and may even be personally known to an individual villager). Survey respondents perceive that the establishment of a new, nearer district could potentially open further opportunities to seek employment opportunities in government, and the creation of a new district could bring with it the establishment of new services. The creation of an additional district is thus reframed as an opportunity for communities to realise improvement and development in their local area.

Finally, as described in Chapter 3, the household survey was conducted in sites that span the three major regions of Uganda. As discussed in section 5.1, it was expected that the economic, political, cultural and geographical/agricultural differences between these regions would be reflected in the results of the household survey. However, while the results of the survey do to some extent reflect the differences between the studied regions (for example, with participants' responses from Lira District pointing to the higher levels of poverty in northern Uganda), overall the survey results are relatively consistent across the six studied sites for a majority of the survey's questions. In each location, participants' survey responses convey consistently poor outcomes from decentralisation, with poor-quality service delivery and non-responsive governments being reported across the studied sites. Participants consistently report low levels of engagement in planning and budgeting processes, challenges in affording school fees, and absent medical supplies when healthcare was needed. Dissatisfaction with the standard of governance at the sub-national level is widespread, including in regions such as Ntungamo, in which higher levels of

economic activity might have been expected to translate into greater levels of satisfaction with governance standards. Participants also reported consistently that they prefer that their elected representatives are from the same tribal group as themselves, as this leads to easier communication and higher standards of representation. Furthermore, there is widespread support for the creation of additional districts, in each of the studied sites other than Village 5. In Villages 1-4 and Village 6, survey participants argued that they perceive that the creation of additional districts may create improved service delivery and may generate increased employment opportunities. Even in Village 5, survey participants agreed that the creation of new districts brings these same opportunities, even though they felt that their own region is too sparsely-populated to make an additional district necessary; there was not disagreement with the benefits that are created from a new district being established. In the following chapters, the implications and theoretical connections of these results are analysed and discussed.

Chapter Six:

Drivers of district proliferation:
The political and economic incentives of multiple actors

> I think [district creation] is largely political. The President has been in campaigns and gets to speak to these people. They are always asking him for districts, for ministers, for.... Everyone wants to have a separate power base, and their own ministry, their own, their own, their own... So I am sure he doesn't say no, he keeps saying yes to all these requests, and this is how we have 112 districts. And that is why that swearing in [of new MPs] is going to last for four days. Because we have 443 MPs, up from 375. So. We are stuck in this bad way.
>
> - *Senior Economist, OPM, Kampala*[442]

6.1 Introduction: Strategies for access and survival under decentralisation

As described in the literature in section 2.1, theoretical models of decentralisation argue that the introduction of sub-national governments generates more-responsive governance, better targeting and quality of public services, and greater participation of communities in governance. By moving the site of government closer to the served populations, local governments can be more cognisant of the development needs of the local community. In turn, greater proximity between citizens and governments means that citizens can monitor the performance of local governments, and exercise choice at elections to exclude from office those who have performed poorly.

[442] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 74, 17 May 2016.

However, Chapters Four and Five presented the results from research and data collection undertaken for this thesis, in Kampala and in three rural districts spread across Uganda's three regions. Results were collected that incorporate the viewpoints of both elite and non-elite actors, to analyse decentralisation from both the elite and the grassroot perspective. The results collected suggest that in Uganda, the implementation of decentralisation has generated a range of issues, relating to the financing, performance and independence of sub-national governments. Expert informants in interviews, village-level participants in the household survey, and quantitative data from the budget process each point to a range of challenges and issues in the operation of decentralised governance. In turn, these decentralisation outcomes have implications for the quality of service delivery, the participation of communities in governance, and the performance of sub-national governments.

This chapter draws together the three sets of results from the elements of fieldwork undertaken for this thesis: quantitative data, interviews of elite actors, and a household-level survey, as have been fully presented in Chapters Four and Five. The relationship between the research results and the existing literature is also compared and contrasted. In drawing together these sets of results, this chapter analyses the overall fieldwork outcomes, and situates the research undertaken for the thesis within the broader literature. The analysis sets out where the research supports the findings in the relevant literature, and where the thesis qualifies or extends the existing literature. Furthermore, this chapter analyses the implications of district proliferation by drawing on the primary research conducted for this thesis, and articulates where this research qualifies or supports the existing research on this topic.

The analysis presented in this chapter raises the suggestion that the poor performance of decentralisation and of sub-national governments has resulted in poor service delivery, and dissatisfaction among the studied communities with the outcomes of decentralisation. From this point, it is argued that different actors within the public policy space hope to pursue different strategies in improving the outcomes of decentralisation. For some, decentralisation has not yet been implemented completely or deeply enough, so that decentralisation's contribution to sub-national service delivery and community participation can be improved through the creation of new districts. For others, improvements in the quality of local governance hold the key

to improving decentralisation, and the creation of additional districts draws much-needed resources away from expenditure priorities in other areas. It is then suggested that the motivations and incentives of a range actors across the Ugandan political economy – from elite levels to the village – create a common drive towards the continual creation of additional districts and sub-counties.

By bringing together the three elements of field research undertaken for this thesis, and comparing and contrasting these findings against the existing literature, this chapter adopts both a top-down and bottom-up approach to addressing the research question: the viewpoints of both elites and village-level participants are included. This analysis thus contributes to addressing the two-directional nature of the research question, by asking how the political and economic context of Uganda both affects, and is affected by, decentralisation. The emergence of district proliferation is framed as an outcome of this interaction.

6.2 Issues in the current decentralisation system: Consistent results

This section draws together the results of research undertaken for this thesis, of both qualitative methods and quantitative data, and undertakes analysis that draws comparisons between these results and the existing literature. The fieldwork results of this thesis highlight the challenges for PFM and sub-national governance that have been generated by decentralisation in Uganda. This section presents fieldwork results that support the arguments made in the existing literature,[443] regarding the weaknesses of the decentralisation system in Uganda. It is argued that the current model of decentralisation in Uganda results in: a high level of dependence of sub-national governments on the central government; low levels of responsiveness of sub-national governments to the development needs of local communities; continued dominance of the central government in priority-setting processes; and poor-quality public services. In short, the current decentralisation system in Uganda is not delivering responsive and participatory governance to the grassroot, and has not improved the targeting of services to local development needs. The implications of these outcomes will be discussed in the following sections.

Sub-national government financing and staffing: Insufficient and problematic

The results of fieldwork undertaken for this thesis have revealed a number of concerns relating to sub-national governments' financing, performance, independence and capacity, in support of existing literature[444] relating to this topic. In particular, qualitative and quantitative data point to issues in four key areas: low local-revenue collection; high levels of conditionality in the funding transferred to sub-national governments; a high absorption of funding by administrative costs at the district level; and poor performance and capacity of local councils and sub-national governments.

Locally-raised revenue is inadequate

[443] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*; Jean et al., 'Local Government Fiscal Discretion in Uganda'.
[444] Jean et al., 'Local Government Fiscal Discretion in Uganda'.

There is a substantial challenge in Uganda in seeking tax payments from members of the community, particularly in rural areas that do not have high levels of participation in a market economy. As reported by key interlocutors, firstly in Kampala and then at lower-government levels across the three districts studied for this thesis, it is relatively common in rural Uganda for citizens to pay no tax, or to pay some form of tax only rarely. As described by interview participants, district and sub-county governments are permitted under the *Local Government Act 1997* to collect revenue in the form of taxes and levies on specific economic activities.[445] However, interview participants in Lira, Pallisa and Ntungamo explained that in their districts, the level of economic activity within these categories is so low that little revenue can be derived in this way. As described[446] by the CAO of one of the studied districts:

> But the challenge with it is the sources are small. We have like, property tax. We have local service tax. Local hotel tax. Market fees, trading licences, money from bids, through government procurement processes that are fundable – applications for those who are applying for a survey of land and registration, and so on. Those fees are normally collected, but they are – they are a bit small.

These reports from key informants are supported by budget data[447] indicating that for most districts, the percentage of the district annual budget that is made up of locally-raised revenue is around 2 to 3 per cent. These results support what is found in the literature from other authors' research in Uganda.[448]

As explained by interview participants, the importance of locally-raised revenue in the funding envelope of sub-national governments is that this revenue may be spent at the discretion of that district or sub-county, without the approval of the central government. Where local revenue collection is low, and districts become dependent on conditional transfers from the central government, the ability of sub-national

[445] Income taxes are also levied on public-servant employees of the district and sub-county.
[446] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 6. 03 February 2016.
[447] National Budget Framework Papers statements of accounts, 2003/04 to 2015/16. Analysis by author.
[448] For example Steven Jean et al., "Local Government Fiscal Discretion in Uganda." NYU Advanced Project in Management & Policy (2010).

governments to respond to local development priorities is hindered.[449] A Senior Economist at OPM explains:[450]

> Ideally, it's a bottom-up approach that the district should focus on. Unfortunately it's top-bottom, because the district will come up with very good plans, from the village all the way up to the top. …. Unfortunately the funds will not permit them to implement even a third of it, because the centre determines what you get, the centre has its conditions, and that kills the entire bottom-up.

Thus, low levels of local revenue collection undermine a core rationale for the implementation of decentralisation: that local-level governments are better able than the central government to respond to local development issues. Because levels of locally-raised revenue are low, sub-national governments remain dependent in practice on funding delivered by the central government, a large majority of which is conditional, as discussed below.

Conditionality in transfers: hinders sub-national government responsiveness

According to both central and sub-national government interviewees,[451] a substantial majority of the funding that is transferred from the central government to lower governments is in the form of conditional grants. Sub-national governments are not entitled to direct conditional funds towards any activities other than those that are specified in the guidelines accompanying each grant. Data from the national budget[452] supports this concern, and indicates that the percentage of transfers to sub-national governments that is in the form of conditional grants is approximately 87 per cent across all districts between 2011/12 and 2015/16. These findings from fieldwork results are in accordance with and support of those of authors in the existing literature, such as Asiimwe and Musisi,[453] and Kuteesa et al.,[454] who argue that the high

[449] This result is echoed in the findings of Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[450] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 74. 17 May 2016.
[451] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 12. 05 May 2016.
[452] From the annual MTEFs, 2011/12 to 2015/16.
[453] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[454] Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*.

proportion of conditional grants in transfers to sub-national governments reduces the responsiveness of these governments to local priorities and needs.

Substantial wage bill and administrative costs crowd out development expenditure

A third issue identified during research and data collection is the high proportion of discretionary district-level funding that is absorbed by expenditure on wages and other administrative funds. As shown by an analysis of the MTEF,[455] of the resource envelope that is available to sub-national governments, a small percentage (around 15 per cent for most districts) is comprised of the unconditional grant, which is funding that can be committed to the priorities of that sub-national unit itself.[456] However, as explained by key informants in the three studied districts, recurrent expenses include the wages of staff of the district itself, as well as administrative costs such as office equipment, computers and vehicles that are required to operate the district.[457] As a result, expenditure on the administration of the district itself and on salary payments of staff tends to crowd out discretionary, unconditional expenditure on service delivery. This is substantiated by budget data[458] indicating that the wage bill of the three studied districts comprises half of the annual unconditional grant of the district itself, as illustrated in figure 4.11. In the three studied districts, the wage bill and other recurrent expenses comprise more than half of the expenditure funded by the unconditional grant, with only the remainder (approximately 8 per cent of the annual district budget) remaining for development expenditure (to address the community's nominated development priorities). These results supports research conducted by authors such as Asiimwe and Musisi,[459] and Jean et al.,[460] who describe high levels of conditionality and fiscal burden caused by the wage bill in districts across Uganda.

[455] For the financial years 2011/12 to 2015/16, for all districts.
[456] This unallocated funding is comprised of revenue that the sub-national government is able to raise locally (2 to 3 per cent), and transfers of funds from the central government that are unconditional (10 to 12 per cent). The remaining 85 to 87 per cent of funding is conditional, and is earmarked by the central government for expenditures on specific projects.
[457] *Pers.Comm*. Interviews with author, numbers 3 (03 February 2016), 19 (11 February 2016) and 48 (28 April 2016).
[458] Source: Local Government Budget Framework Papers of the three studied districts, 2012/13 to 2015/16. Analysis author's own.
[459] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[460] Jean et al., 'Local Government Fiscal Discretion in Uganda'.

Local governments' performance and capacity are poor

A final issue relating to local governments' operations and performance that emerges from the research is the issue of poor performance and capacity of sub-national governments. In interviews, key informants at the central government level explained that many districts are operating with less than their full complement of staff, with negative implications for their performance. These issues are particularly acute for remote areas, which can be challenging for both attraction of qualified staff, and retention of those staff who are hired.[461] A Senior Economist in OPM summarises[462] their view of the situation:

> For us, we have poor pay, so you get the worst people, and then we expect a lot from them, but they can't deliver much.

These findings from this research are reflected in research described in the existing literature. Authors such as Onyach-Olaa[463] and Golooba-Mutebi[464] similarly argue that the low capacity and staffing levels of sub-national governments in Uganda represents a flaw in decentralisation, as these governments are poorly equipped to manage the complexities of delivering public services.

Priority-setting process and local-level consultation: The centre continues to dominate

The theories underpinning decentralisation, as discussed in section 2.1, suggest that bringing the site of government decision-making 'nearer to the people' will facilitate improved participation of communities in governance, via mechanisms such as bottom-up planning and budgeting. However, the research undertaken for this thesis, collected through interviews and a household-level survey, suggest that while these mechanisms may indeed take place, in the three studied districts, the realities of the political economy context change the outcomes of decentralisation such that genuine participation may not be achieved. In this sense, the research conducted for

[461] Kakumba and Fennell, 'Human Resources Retention in Local Government: Review of Uganda's Policy and Institutional Mechanisms for Performance'.
[462] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 74. 17 May 2016.
[463] Onyach-Olaa, 'The Challenges of Implementing Decentralisation: Recent Experiences in Uganda'.
[464] Golooba-Mutebi, 'Devolution and Outsourcing of Municipal Services in Kampala City, Uganda: An Early Assessment'.

this thesis supports arguments made in the existing literature[465]: that while the systems of participation are in place, the outcome of participation may not be realised. While the budget process has inbuilt goals of participation and consultation, the realities of the Ugandan political-economy context mean that these are currently being disrupted, in the studied field sites.

Consultation in priority-setting process: How genuine is community participation?

Theoretically, the Ugandan budget formulation process contains a number of elements that are designed to generate consultation at the sub-national level. As described in section 1.1, communication between levels of LCs is designed to flow upwards, from LC1 to LC5, due to the inclusion of consultation stages in the budget process. The district's annual budget and workplan, therefore, are theoretically comprised of the most pressing development priorities of the villages contained within the district.[466] This sub-section draws on results from interviews with key actors in the PFM system as well results from the household-level survey, to argue that in the studied districts, community participation may not be realised to the extent described in these theoretical frameworks.

However, interviews conducted with key informants at two levels of government – the central government level and in three districts – call into question whether the development priorities of the community are genuinely addressed by the national budget. While the bottom-up planning process may be faithfully followed, the dominance of the top-down weight of prioritisation effectively cancels out the bottom-up plans. As discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2, the funding that is received by district and sub-county governments and administrative arms is largely conditional funding. The purpose of these funds has already been determined by sectoral ministries at the central level, and communicated downwards to the district level via the IPFs and

[465] Balunywa et al., 'An Analysis of Fiscal Decentralization as a Strategy for Improving Revenue Performance in Ugandan Local Governments'; Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.

[466] This process is described by Francis and James (Paul Francis and Robert James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation: The Contradictions of Uganda's Decentralization Program', *World Development* 31, no. 2 (1 February 2003): 325–37), who then argue that in practice, most sub-national governments in Uganda receive insufficient funding for these bottom-up development plans to be enacted.

Guidelines contained within the budget process. That is, after receiving from the central government the conditional grants and the guidelines that explain the purpose for which the grants are earmarked, district governments are required to develop a list of activities to make use of these funds. According to respondents in the three studied districts and at the national level of government, the priorities expressed by the community are only utilised for the purpose of distributing activities amongst villages, rather than determining which sectors will be prioritised for funding. Priorities that are generated at the village level but that do not accord with the national development priorities will not be included in the budget, as explained[467] by an Economist from MoFPED:

> Sometimes a district wants to construct a building, we tell them to phase it out, because it will not be possible to cover it. We advise them to take it out.

Furthermore, findings from the household survey undertaken in six villages suggest that villagers do not feel that they are included in the budget process as it is conducted in their local area. 75 per cent of respondents answered *No* to the question of whether they feel that they are involved and consulted in the process of formulating the national budget. 75 per cent of respondents also indicated that they were not aware that the budget process is intended to be consultative. For many survey respondents, their experience of the budget is limited to listening to a radio broadcast of the budget speech. A mere 9 per cent of respondents believed that the community has a role in determining the development priorities of their village, with the remainder nominating the district or central governments as the chief determinants of village-level priorities.

Overall, in support of findings by authors in the existing literature,[468] the results from the household-level survey and from interviews with participants across multiple levels of government suggest that the central assumptions of decentralisation may not hold in practice, in the three studied districts. Specifically, the theoretical principles of consultation and participation in the national budget process, that are central to the

[467] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 29. 11 April 2016.
[468] Lambright, *Decentralization in Uganda*.

theoretical assumptions underpinning decentralisation policy, may not be being realised in the ways that the theories suggest they will.

Community engagement with government: Grassroot actors contradict elites

A guiding theory of decentralisation is that the creation of local governments allows villagers to participate in resource-allocation and service delivery processes.[469] For example, the creation of government units that are in close proximity to communities theoretically allows villagers to complain to local leaders in the event of poor-quality service delivery, or to be consulted on their opinions of local development needs. However, as discussed above, the high percentage of the budget that is comprised of conditional grants means that central-government development priorities dominate locally-generated priorities in the outcomes of the budget.

Two principal areas of concern can be identified regarding participation of citizens in local-level governance. Firstly, respondents to the household survey explained that they rarely succeed in seeking redress for poor-quality public services. Of the 32 participants in the household survey that had reported concerns about a public service to an elected local representative, only one reported that the issue that been fully resolved. Furthermore, some participants explained that they feared reprisals or other negative outcomes if they were to make a complaint about a poor-quality service.[470] In addition, for those respondents to the survey who had made a complaint but did not feel their concern was addressed, comments explained that those who received their complaint did nothing to resolve the issue.[471] These findings are supported by fieldwork conducted with government officials. In an interview, a District's CAO explained that one of the main challenges he faces in his role is managing the expectations of the community, and explaining to them that resource limitations mean their complaints are unlikely to be addressed.[472]

[469] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[470] *Pers.Comm*. Comments made to research assistant, and then recorded in writing, during the household survey. 20 April 2016.
[471] *Pers.Comm*. Comments made to research assistant, and then recorded in writing, during the household survey. 24 April 2016.
[472] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 40. 22 April 2016.

Secondly, household-survey respondents explained that they do not feel consulted on their development priorities, and that they do not place great value in village consultative meetings. Of respondents to the survey, almost 40 per cent of respondents reported that they never attend a village meeting. Explanatory comments[473] relating to this question described barriers to participation in village meetings such as not feeling sufficiently educated or literate to attend, or not having been invited to attend the village meeting.[474] These results point to barriers to participation in governance processes that are more complex than proximity alone, implying that creating sub-national governments nearer to the community may not have been sufficient in the studied sites to drive participation in governance.[475] Respondents reported that their participation in the budget process was limited to listening to the budget speech on radio; in this sense, the 'consultative' budget process is reduced to simply informing citizens of the budget outcomes, for respondents in the studied sites.

Participants in interviews with more senior members of government supported these village-level views. A Senior Economist from MoLG explains[476] that villagers have become disengaged from participation in village meetings, as a result of being supplied with services that are different from their own preferences:

> The citizens are not demanding for services. That participation is still not quite.... We were talking about bottom-up earlier, but sometimes when you call a village meeting, you have about 20 people making a decision for about 100 or 200. They are the few who come for the meeting; the rest don't want to know what's going on. So, those challenges – the citizens themselves participating in, in wanting whatever services you are actually giving to them.

[473] Comments made to research assistant, and then recorded in writing, during the household survey. 20 April 2016.
[474] Village meetings are theoretically open to all adult members of the village.
[475] Cooke and Kothari, *Participation*.
[476] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 77. 23 May 2016.

Service delivery at the sub-national level: Poor quality, expensive, poorly financed

One of the foundational principles of decentralisation is that its introduction can generate improvements in public services, as the greater proximity of sub-national governments facilitates greater awareness of local development needs. Services are then better able to be targeted to these needs, generating improvements in allocative efficiency.[477] However, results obtained through fieldwork undertaken for this thesis suggest that a number of persistent barriers exist to the delivery of high-quality public services, *despite* the introduction of decentralisation. This section presents an analysis of fieldwork results relating to continuing poor-quality services, funding support for service delivery, and strategies for obtaining services for citizens at the grassroot.

Firstly, respondents to the household-level survey undertaken in six villages report that from their perspective, the quality of service delivery in their local area remains poor. Respondents reported that medicines are frequently unavailable at their village's health post, with 92 per cent reporting that they had experienced a drug stock-out on at least one occasion. Respondents report that the fees charged for medical care represent a barrier to accessing the service, and that they are frequently challenged by the need to pay school fees. Almost one in three households with school-aged children report that their children have been removed from school on at least one occasion over non-payment of school fees. At the district level, likewise, interview participants in three districts reported that the quality of education is often lacking. An RDC reports[478] that children are becoming demoralised after arriving at school and finding one hundred other students in their classroom, with one teacher. A DEO describes[479] schools in his district in which half of the students are forced to sit on the classroom floor due to a shortage of desks. An LC1 Chair at the village level explained[480] that there is no healthcare centre in their local sub-county, despite legislation setting out requirements for an HC3 at the sub-county level (and indeed an HC2 at the parish level).

[477] Craig and Porter, 'The Third Way and the Third World: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategies in the Rise of "Inclusive" Liberalism'.
[478] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 35. 21 April2016.
[479] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 7. 04 February 2016.
[480] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 43. 22 April 2016.

In the absence of government responses to their priorities and needs, village members report seeking their own, individual, solutions to development problems. For example, households have overcome a lack of government-implemented electricity supply by buying solar panels for their households. However, the capacity of households to address development needs directly is limited; more complex services such as healthcare and education cannot be provided by the community alone. Villagers in the studied site therefore seek alternative to paths to addressing their development needs. As will be discussed in the following section 6.3, this includes agitation for the intensification and expansion of the decentralisation system itself.

In addition to these responses from the household survey, interview respondents also indicate that in their view, the funding that is transferred to districts from the central government is too low to be able to finance high-quality public services. When asked, *When you receive the transfers from the central government, do you find that they are sufficient to cover the activities that are in the workplan?*, a DEO responded:[481]

> They are never sufficient. Never! Never, never. I have for example – government usually sends us funds for particularly primary schools. And I have 93 of them. I wish you had time to visit a few, sample and visit a few. You will find us having problems in those schools. The facilities, infrastructure and what have you, are not adequate. So that money is never enough.

From civil society, a Senior Economist at the World Bank's Kampala office concurs:[482]

> *CvH: Do you think that, overall, the districts receive enough finances to be able to deliver good-quality services?*
>
> No. No. That is a very resounding no.

In addition to these results from interviews at the district level and from within civil society, quantitative data from the national budget suggests additional factors in the poor-quality delivery of public services. Data collected from the NBFPs reveals that

[481] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 17. 10 February 2016.
[482] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.

the funding received by district governments fluctuates over time, with large changes in the estimates for each district from one year to the next. In addition, a comparison of estimates and releases for the three studied districts reveals that the funding that is in fact transferred to district governments regularly differs from the funding commitment that was made at the beginning of that financial year.[483] As a result of fluctuations within these two variables, districts face challenges in developing plans for service delivery.

These findings support those made by authors within the existing literature. For example, authors such as Crook and Sverrisson[484] argue that the stability and predictability of funding flows to local governments are important for their ability to deliver public services effectively. Where these funding flows are unpredictable or irregular, challenges can arise for medium- or long-term planning processes.

Section conclusion: Service-delivery and participation weaknesses

In summary, the results generated for this thesis support evidence developed by authors in the existing literature, such as those made by Jean et al.[485] and Asiimwe and Musisi.[486] Public services at the sub-national level are persistently of poor quality, with low and unreliable funding, over-stretched services, and failures of the supply chain for key inputs. The results gathered for this thesis suggest that decentralisation has not been successful in generating high-quality and targeted services, or heightened community engagement with the service-delivery system. Instead, interview and survey participants report frustration and disengagement with the planning and budgeting system, and report low levels of confidence in the performance of sub-national governments. Government officials themselves, including across multiple levels of government, report being aware of the failures of service delivery at the sub-national level, arguing that high levels of conditionality in financial flows prevent greater responsiveness of government to the community's development needs. In the absence of policy change at the central level that allows greater

[483] This is illustrated in figures 4.5 to 4.7 in Chapter Four.
[484] Crook and Sverrisson, 'Decentralisation and Poverty-Alleviation in Developing Countries: A Comparative Analysis, or, Is West Bengal Unique?'
[485] Jean et al., 'Local Government Fiscal Discretion in Uganda'.
[486] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.

discretionary authority for districts, district governments are relatively unable to exercise control over fiscal expenditures. The image that emerges from research undertaken at the grassroot level is of significant unmet demand for public services in the six studied sites, and for greater responsiveness of government to the needs of the village. The current decentralisation framework appears to be failing to respond to these demands for improved public service delivery and improved consultation of local communities in governance processes.

6.3 Improving decentralisation: By creating more? Or aiming for better?

The previous sections in this chapter have described the ways in which the central rationales of implementing decentralisation are not being realised in the studied sites. Despite the promise of improved quality and targeting of public services and enhanced democratic participation, both the results of fieldwork undertaken for this thesis and the existing literature point to disappointing outcomes. At the household level, villagers report little communication or interaction with government; at the district level, expert informants indicate that their priorities are determined by the central government; and at the centre, elite actors describe the poor capacity and performance of sub-national governments. Consequently, service delivery remains poor at the sub-national level; villagers report a degree of disengagement and cynicism about governments; and relationships between central and sub-national governments are strained.

While these issues are widely acknowledged in the literature[487] from the perspectives of central and district elites, the fieldwork conducted for this thesis extend the analytical framework to the grassroot level, finding that household-level respondents in the studied sites are actively seeking improvements to their livelihoods and strategies for accessing resources. Fieldwork results suggest that actors at each level of the political economy, from the elite to the grassroot, look to the decentralisation system to identify how it can be leveraged and utilised for their own benefit and advantage. Where opinions differ is at the question of how this improvement can be achieved: whether that is through *more* decentralisation, or *better* decentralisation.

The research conducted in Kampala and in three districts across Uganda reveals that different actors within the political economy have different perspectives on this question. For some, the question of how decentralisation can be made more effective in terms of delivering good-quality public services is answered by generating additional districts. For these actors, decentralisation is currently unsuccessful at

[487] For example, see Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.

delivering improved services or participatory governance because it has not been implemented to a sufficient extent, and the best mechanism for improving decentralisation is to 'decentralise more' – by creating additional sub-national units. That is, to bring sites of government still nearer to the population, and to advance still further the s of making service delivery more responsive to local development needs.

For others, the creation of additional districts cannot achieve improvements to decentralisation, and rather creates a burden on public financial management. Instead, these actors would prefer to improve the current systems of decentralisation, rather than creating additional systems, through such techniques as improving monitoring and inspections at the sub-national level. For these actors, creating better-performing districts is a preferable policy outcome compared to creating additional, but still poorly-performing, districts. The following section discusses these two positions in more detail.

Better decentralisation? Monitoring, oversight and performance improvements

For many key informants, particularly those in senior levels of government, the decision to decentralise public service delivery in Uganda was a valid decision, and decentralisation promises to deliver on the Government's goals of improved participatory governance, improved targeting of service delivery, and bringing resources 'nearer' to the population. The barrier between the current outcomes of decentralisation and these policy goals relates to the way in which decentralisation is implemented. For these interviewees, decentralisation would perform well if it were implemented more completely and carefully, and with better accountability. From this perspective, decentralisation would improve if monitoring were undertaken of service delivery, and if local governments' leaders were held to account for poor performance.

Research participants who hold this view tended to be employees of the central government, and from their perspective, greater involvement of central-government officials in the implementation of decentralisation would naturally improve its outcomes. In their argument, the current decentralisation arrangements contain insufficient resources for central-government public servants to undertake travel to

monitor service delivery at the village level, leaving them without the time or the financial resources to be able to achieve this. If central-government public servants were able to travel with more frequency to villages to monitor the delivery of services, and to hold district public servants and elected officials to account for service delivery, the implementation of decentralised services would improve. An Assistant Commissioner at MoFPED summarises[488] this view:

> *CvH: And do you think – on the districts – do you think there are the right number of districts in Uganda, or too many, or -*
>
> Too many. That is my answer. I think there are too many, because one thing they say is that creating more districts is taking services closer to the people, but for me I don't think that's the right thing, because, one, even if we have fewer districts, but had the right number of health centres, the right number of schools, within the required distances, and we had all these community sensitisation programs, I really think it would work. Because right now, you find that, for a district, you are increasing the administrative costs.

Crucially, these respondents argue that an improvement in the delivery of public services under decentralisation would remove the impetus to create additional districts. Actors argue that the creation of additional districts is expensive, and is approaching the point of being financially inviable. For example, a Team Leader from UNICEF in Kampala argues[489] that the number of districts has already moved beyond a level that is financially sustainable in the long term. The Permanent Secretary of MoFPED has appealed[490] for a cessation in the creation of new districts, arguing that their proliferation is unduly burdening the budget. If the current group of districts could be made to perform more effectively and efficiently, the delivery of services at the village level could be made to improve without the creation of further districts. Having seen this improvement, there would be less argument made by villagers and communities that their area requires a district in order for public services to be provided. In short, in order to improve the performance of decentralised service

[488] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 24. 5 April 2016.
[489] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 80. 26 May 2016.
[490] Lule, 'Uganda'.

delivery, the decentralisation system should be made to perform better, rather than being increased in scale through creating more districts.

More decentralisation? Improving decentralisation by creating districts

A second position on how decentralisation can be improved in Uganda argues that its current poor performance arises because decentralisation has not been implemented to a sufficient degree. In this line of argument, which tends to have been put forward by sub-national public servants in interviews, districts have not been able to become responsive to local development priorities because they are not yet located near enough to the populations they are representing. That is, the physical distance between the population and their representatives has not been reduced enough in order for communication between these two groups to occur. According to those who hold this view, the performance of decentralisation can be improved by creating additional districts, as dividing one district into two or more smaller districts makes the average size of the new districts smaller, and so reduces the distance between the district's headquarters and the local populations.

As well as being articulated in interviews with district-level civil servants, these views emerge strongly in the household survey, in which villagers in the studied sites argue that the creation of additional districts will bring service-delivery nearer. Free-response answers from those who answered *Yes* to the question *Do you think the creation of more districts makes service delivery better?* included "sufficient services which were previously lacking are brought closer to the people";[491] "at least there every district will be with a good hospital, schools, making services delivery better";[492] and "services will reach everybody at the grassroot".[493]

During the interviews conducted for this research, this position was put forward more commonly by staff working at the district, sub-county and village level than by staff working at the national level. Staff at the sub-national level who argued in favour of more districts being created, and so expanding decentralised structures in Uganda,

[491] Response to household survey question 92. Household 5, village 4 (Lira District).
[492] Response to household survey question 92. Household 3, village 5 (Ntungamo District).
[493] Response to household survey question 92. Household 8, village 3 (Lira District).

argue that the creation of more districts brings benefits to the grassroot. These benefits include the creation of additional jobs, and bringing additional resources to sub-national levels, which otherwise are under-resourced and have few employment opportunities. For example, an LC1 Chair argued[494] that a new district should be created near to his village, as the district headquarters are too far away to be accessible to his community. An LC3 Chair describes[495] the creation of his sub-county, five years prior to the interview, which was created on the grounds that demand for local services had grown too high. In this sense, 'more' decentralisation is preferable to 'better' decentralisation.

In addition, creating new, smaller districts means that each service delivery point will then be serving a smaller population, reducing the demand on each service delivery point and contributing to an improvement in the quality of services.[496] That is, if schools are overcrowded with pupils, creating an additional district (which would then necessitate[497] constructing an additional primary school) will reduce the number of students attending the original district's school, and so reduce pressure on class sizes. A Senior Economist from MoLG explains[498] this view:

> The smaller the local government is, the more closer the services are to the people. Because you would imagine that a very poor person, travelling about 30 or 40 kilometres to get a service from the centre – it may be expensive, so by breaking them smaller, it helps those who can't afford, to get closer to the administrative units.

It is noteworthy that these arguments – that a new district is required because current districts are too large, and should be sub-divided – is effectively an argument that decentralisation should be imposed more intensively. That is, this argument is an extension of the rationale of decentralisation itself: that drawing the site of government

[494] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 43. 22 April 2016.
[495] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 41. 21 April 2016.
[496] Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006'.
[497] According to the minimum service standards for the education sector, as specified in the *Education Sector Strategic Plan 2015-2019*.
[498] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 73. 16 May 2016.

nearer to the population will improve the accessibility of government and the provision of public services. There is no separate rationale for the creation of a new district, other than to argue for decentralisation to be concentrated further: for 'more' decentralisation.[499] It is also noteworthy that there is not a lower bound for this argument, in the sense of nominating an ideal size for a district, in terms of either land area or population size. The division of a district into smaller districts does not mean that those child districts will not themselves be subdivided in future. The argument that a current district is too large or too populous is a subjective one, and thus can be easily manipulated by those with an interest in the creation of additional, smaller districts.

As discussed in section 5.5, for villagers in the six studied field sites, the creation of an additional district has therefore become a proxy or a strategy for accessing public services. Rather than requesting the creation of an additional school to ease over-crowding, citizens lobby for the creation of an additional district, in the understanding that this will subsequently generate the supply of an additional school. The creation of an additional district has become a survival strategy from the point of view of those at the grassroot, as will be discussed in the following section.

Section conclusion: The political economy of 'more' or 'better' decentralisation

As this discussion as highlighted, while many of the key informants of this research identified the need for reform of the decentralisation system to improve its current performance, there are differing opinions as to how this is to be achieved. While some research participants, especially at the sub-national and village levels, argue for additional districts to be created in order to further implement decentralisation, others argue for improvements to be made to the implementation of decentralisation within its existing structures and scale.

A strong counter-argument to the creation of additional districts in Uganda that emerges in the existing literature and in the research conducted for this thesis is that the practice of district proliferation generates substantial cost, and requires a

[499] This finding supports arguments made in the existing literature by Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Reforms*. and by Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.

substantial proportion of resources to be committed to the administration of districts, rather than to the provision of public services.[500] As will be discussed in section 6.4, in this economic-oriented argument, the opportunity cost of creating additional districts is excessively high, compared to committing that same funding to improving the quality of public services that are delivered by existing districts. From a fiscal point of view, the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of public goods by district and sub-county governments can be improved without undertaking the burdensome cost of creating additional districts.[501]

However, in the trade-off between economic arguments against 'more' decentralisation and the creation of additional districts, and political arguments in favour of creating new districts, political arguments appear to be the dominant force. It was widely agreed in this research by both key informants in interviews and household survey participants that the principal motivation behind the rapid creation of additional districts is political expediency. From the level of the village to the central government, research participants noted that politicians' motivation to be elected or re-elected was a central driving force for the creation of new districts. As President Museveni remarked[502] at a function to celebrate the commencement of a newly-created district:

> Although a new district takes a lot of money, this is the democracy we fought for. People must ask for what they want and get [it].

[500] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.
[501] 'Is It Still Economical to Create More Districts?'
[502] As reported in the *New Vision* newspaper, 7 August 2005: 'Can Uganda's Economy Support More Districts?', https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1119670/uganda-eur-economy-support-districts

Daily Monitor NEWS BUSINESS OPED SPECIAL REPORTS MAGAZINES SPORTS

THURSDAY AUGUST 25 2011

Government proposes 21 more new districts

By MERCY NALUGO

A leaked draft proposal to Cabinet confirms the creation of more 21 new districts, apparently brought in fulfilment of president Museveni's campaign promises to bring services closer to the people.
If this proposal is approved by Parliament, the number of districts will shoot to 133, from the current 112 all in the name of improving service delivery.

According to the report from the Local Government ministry before the Parliamentary Public Service and Local Government committee, the proposed 21 districts are Bugweri, Bunyangabo, Namisindwa, Kasanda, Butebo, Kapelebyong, Kakuto, Kyotera and Rubanda districts. Others are Rukiga, Pakwach, Kalaki, Kazo, Kagadi, Kakumiro and Kitagwenda districts while those pending council resolutions are, Nabilatuk, Omoro, Rwampara, Kyaddondo and Kikuube district.

The new district of Bugweri would be carved out of the current mother district of Iganga with its headquarters at Busesa while Omoro district would be cut off Gulu district.
Two districts of Kakuto and Kyotera would be formed out of the present day Rakai district while others Rukiga and Rubanda would be carved out of Kabale district.

Image 5: Announcement[503] *of new districts, proposed in 2011*

Political leaders across government, but most commonly at the district and national levels, claim in the lead-up to elections (such as the 2016 election) that, if elected, they will create additional districts. As depicted in image 5 above, these announcements are widely publicised, such as in the *Daily Monitor* national daily newspaper. In Pallisa District, household survey respondents[504] reported that in the lead-up to the 2016 election, candidates for election to the LC5 Council committed to delivering a new district in the area.[505] As promised, Butebo District came into operation on 1 July 2017, reducing Pallisa to two counties, and to a land area of approximately 140 square kilometres.

[503] Mercy Nalugo. 2011. 'Government proposes 21 new districts'. *Daily Monitor*. Accessed 13 August 2018. http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/News/2466686-1224472-format-xhtml-mycr13z/index.html
[504] 18 per cent of respondents in the two studied villages in Pallisa reported that an election candidate promised to deliver a new district if they were elected.
[505] This was to be achieved by splitting Butebo County from Pallisa and elevating Butebo to the level of a District of its own.

Overall, research conducted for this thesis suggests that in the process of balancing political against economic concerns in Uganda, the political interests of multiple actors in favour of creating 'more' decentralisation has tended to outweigh the economic argument in favour of improving decentralisation in its existing form. The following section discusses the consequences for public financial management of this outcome of the interaction between the Ugandan political economy and decentralisation policy.

6.4 District proliferation: Worsening local government financing and staffing shortages

The phenomenon of district proliferation in Uganda emerged in the late 1990s, with the number of districts in Uganda almost quadrupling in the contemporary era. Uganda contained 33 districts when NRM took power in 1986, compared to 135 by 2019.[506] This section analyses the complications of district proliferation, by detailing the challenges that are caused by creating a large number of new districts. In doing so, this section supports, and then extends, arguments that are made in the existing literature. It will be argued that the challenges for public financial management and administration that are generated by the creation of new districts are well-known and acknowledged by a wide range of actors.

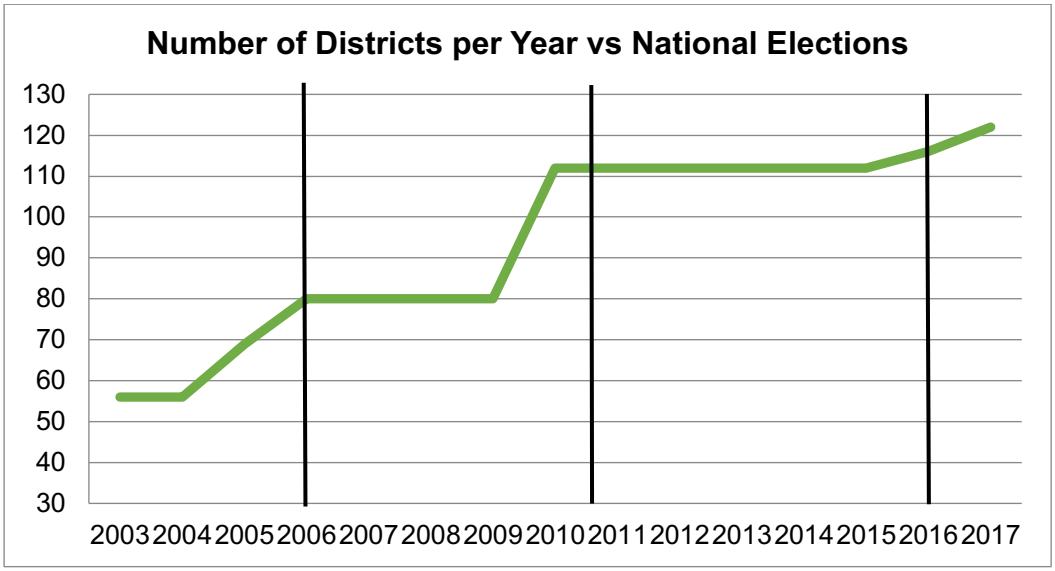
Fiscal pressures caused by new districts: Research and literature in agreement

Firstly, relating to financial management, a growing body of literature argues that the creation of additional districts in Uganda, especially at the fast rate of recent years, has placed further strain on an already burdened financial system.[507] The research undertaken for this thesis is in accord with this literature, and public statements from prominent members of civil society and government. Criticisms of the proliferation of additional districts include an argument that the wage bill of new districts is creating an unacceptably large burden for public financial management. Analysis from the World Bank[508] calculated that the cost of establishing each new district reaches two billion Shillings per annum (approximately GBP 404,000) on wages and salaries alone. These critiques have been echoed by senior officials within the Ugandan public service, including from the most senior MoFPED official, the Permanent Secretary.[509]

[506] Nicholas Awortwi and A.H.J. (Bert) Helmsing, 'In the Name of Bringing Services Closer to the People? Explaining the Creation of New Local Government Districts in Uganda , In the Name of Bringing Services Closer to the People? Explaining the Creation of New Local Government Districts in Uganda', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 80, no. 4 (2014): 766–88, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852314533455.
[507] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.
[508] 'Op-Ed'.
[509] Lule, 'Uganda'.

Fiscal pressures of new districts: Moratorium announced, then abandoned

In 2012 and 2013, widespread criticism[510] of the financial burden created by the rapid creation of a new districts led to a moratorium on new-district creation being announced by the President in 2013.[511] However, by 2015 and with new elections on the horizon, a series of new districts was announced, with an explicit connection to the re-election of the NRM government.[512] The correlation between competitive, multi-party elections from 2006 onwards, and the creation of additional districts, is depicted below in diagram 6.1. This finding is supportive of literature regarding political clientelism in a sub-Saharan African context more broadly,[513] arguing a clear connection between the introduction or intensification of decentralisation, and attempts to encourage voters to support the incumbent party.



6.1 Correlation between national elections and the creation of new districts

[510] These criticisms were widely publicised in major media outlets. See for example: Sadab Kitata Kaaya, 'New district runs under muvuke tree', *The Observer*, 2 January 2013. https://observer.ug/component/content/article?id=22909:new-district-runs-under-muvule-tree
[511] 'Gov't Drops Proposal on Creation of New Districts'.
[512] 'Museveni Pledges New Districts'.
[513] Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*; Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'.

Fiscal constraints of newer districts

Key informants in interviews at the central level argue that the existing issues in the financing of sub-national governments are further exacerbated by the creation of new districts. Interview respondents explained that newer, smaller districts face even greater constraints in collecting locally-raised revenue than larger districts, as there are fewer citizens and less economic activity in a small district. A Chief Financial Officer in one of the studied districts explains[514] the financial challenges facing newly-created districts:

> Having many districts does not add much, because if you look at our unconditional grant, nationally, it has not increased. So whenever they create a new district, they would just get the money from the mother [original] district and give to the other one. So that means that you find that a district is there, but it cannot put up a main building, it cannot facilitate its employees, although people can move now from the village and reach the district, but still you cannot have enough to have the services increased in their areas.

In addition to these comments made by interviewees at the central level, research participants at the sub-national level also described the fiscal constraints they face. Interview respondents in the three studied districts described the local situation,[515] where local revenue is low, and sub-national governments are dependent on the conditional grants sent by the central government for funding. In this context, the expense of the wage bill crowds out development expenditure that can be used on local public services. The creation of new districts exacerbates this problem, as the proportion of the wage bill remains fixed relative to the district budget, which will be smaller in the case of a newly-created district. In an interview, a MoFPED Economist explains[516] the trade-off of district proliferation. While an increased number of districts

[514] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 48. 28 April 2016.
[515] Notably, the fiscal problems that are generated by the creation of additional districts are well-known and understood by many of the participants in this research, including officials at both the central and district levels. The frustration expressed by research participants when explaining the well-known nature of these flaws suggests that respondents do not feel that they possess the political power or capital to be able to address this situation; that without changes being made by central-government elected officials, this situation is likely to continue.
[516] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 28. 11 April 2016.

places pressure on the wage bill, and thus places pressure on the national budget, it is perceived as bringing services nearer to the district – and thus, it is politically popular.[517] A Senior Economist at MoFPED argues:[518]

> The districts increase the costs of administration, but they do not achieve a lot of change. They are created for political reasons, to give work to LC5s and create MPs, and then the MPs that are added are all on the ruling party side, so it increases the number of ruling-party seats in the Parliament.

A MoFPED Economist explains[519] that the creation of an additional district does not necessarily generate an increase in the funding that will be decentralised to sub-national governments; the decentralised funding envelope is simply divided between a greater number of districts. An additional Economist at MoFPED goes on to explain[520] that if new districts are created without a concurrent increase in funding transferred to them, a greater proportion of decentralised funding is then absorbed by the administration costs of new districts. This outcome has potentially negative implications for expenditure directed to service delivery. This Economist further argues that these outcomes are well-known, suggesting that where a new district is created, this is a decision to prioritise the creation of a new district over resources for service delivery.

Furthermore, a Principal Economist at the World Bank's Kampala office describes[521] the cancellation of the 2013-2015 moratorium on creating additional districts:

> Once you create a district, there are other associated indirect costs that come with running a district. So the Ministry [of Local Government] came up with 59 billion shillings, and that in a way, sort of, made the President say, OK, I didn't know about this, we are going to put a freeze, a moratorium, on the creation of new districts.

[517] van de Walle, 'The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa'.
[518] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 26. 8 April 2016.
[519] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 15. 08 February 2016.
[520] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 29. 11 April 2016.
[521] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.

> But last year, when the [election] campaign started, another 23 districts were announced. So it shows very clearly that it is purely driven by political considerations.

New districts are yet more dependent on the central government

As discussed in section 4.1, where districts are unable to generate a large volume of locally-raised revenue, they become heavily dependent on the conditional grants from the central government for financial support. In turn, this reduces their capacity to be responsive to local development priorities.[522] A Senior Economist from ULGA explains[523] that the dependence of sub-national governments on the central government for financial support creates an imbalance in the power relationship between the two groups:

> Because a local government, before you do anything, you need to consult the centre. And the centre looks at itself as the big brother. And yet we should be working as partners, we should be working as supportive entities.

Overall, both the results of research undertaken for this thesis and findings in the wider literature are in agreement that the creation of additional districts worsens the fiscal burdens already faced by sub-national governments. Sub-national governments become increasingly dependent on the central government for financial resources, and so less able to respond to the development needs and priorities of the community. The research undertaken for this thesis, and the broader literature relating to political clientelism,[524] both suggest that the continued creation of additional districts in the Ugandan context appears to be motivated by political concerns, with fiscal considerations relegated to a secondary concern.

[522] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[523] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 76. 18 May 2016.
[524] Eaton, 'Political Obstacles to Decentralisation: Evidence from Argentina and the Philippines'; Sjögren, 'Battles over Boundaries: The Politics of Territory, Identity and Authority in Three Ugandan Regions'.

District proliferation worsens staffing shortages

Secondly, the research conducted for this thesis supports arguments in the existing literature[525] that the rapid proliferation of districts creates pressures on the adequacy of staffing numbers at the sub-national level. Interview respondents noted that the creation of new districts, particularly a large number of new districts, further exacerbates issues relating to the under-funding and under-staffing of districts.

A number of interview respondents pointed to the challenges created by the formation of a new district, in terms of staffing shortages at the district level. According to an analyst[526] at ACODE, the under-staffing of districts is worsened by the creation of a new district, as the 'parent' (original) district is required to contribute staff members to the 'child' (new) district. A Senior Economist from Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) explains[527] this outcome:

> It has had a lot of effect, because the little that have been there – you divide the staff between the mother district and the other district that has been created. So it reduces the staff levels that would otherwise have been adequate. You see, if you have one district that has 40 per cent and then a new district is created, you go to a state around 22 per cent, as you must support the other district to come up. So when the wage is provided, yes, then you recruit, but also creating a district without giving additional resources just increases the public expenditure in terms of wage.

These statements from central-level government and civil society are echoed by public servants at the sub-national level. As described[528] by a District Human Resource Officer, when a new district is created, the 'parent' district is required to provide 50 per cent of its own staff numbers to support the new district, worsening its own insufficient staffing. Particularly in remote regions, both newly-created 'child'

[525] For example, Asiimwe and Musisi (Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.) describe the challenges for new districts of attracting and retaining staff, particularly for districts in remote or rural areas.
[526] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 79. 26 May 2016.
[527] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 72. 13 May 2016.
[528] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 20. 11 February 2016.

districts and their parent district can experience challenges in recruiting sufficient staff numbers, and these shortages drastically affect the performance of a sub-national government. However, as described in broader literature relating to patrimonialism and political clientelism,[529] the political opportunities that are generated by the rapid creation of new districts (such as being able to 'give' public-sector employment to allies) dominates these concerns about public administration.

District creation worsens elite/non-elite divide

Finally, a number of data points raise the possibility that the creation of additional districts contributes to worsening inequality between elite and non-elite actors at the sub-national level. For some interview participants, the creation of a new district allows district- and sub-county level elite actors to capture the benefits that are made available from the creation of an additional district, such as employment opportunities.[530] Non-elite actors, on the other hand, are not able to leverage a benefit from the creation of additional districts, with the consequence that the economic and political space between elite and non-elite actors grows wider. A Professor at Makerere University explains[531] this view:

> The elites in a rural setting… are cognisant to the opportunities of decentralisation. Either they have participated as councillors, or they are the relatives of local leaders, or they are associated with, they have knowledge of, the works of local authorities, they are part of the contracts that are delivered to local firms. Now that is the category of people who has largely benefited from decentralisation. …. But the ordinary citizens?.... They have their land, they can grow their food, especially food that is, you know, hand to mouth earning. And they also grow food for their eating, and the little that remains, probably they can just sell on the roadside, or take to that market, basically to buy the basics – sugar, soap. And that's all. Now those people talking about decentralisation – they don't see that.

[529] Muno, 'Conceptualizing and Measuring Clientelism'; Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[530] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[531] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 76. 20 May 2016.

In other words, district proliferation may worsen inequality between elites and non-elites at the sub-national level, as only the former group are able to capitalise on the benefits and opportunities that a new district brings. As will be discussed in section 6.6, the creation of a new district is analogous to the creation of a club good, from which members can derive benefits, but from which non-members are excluded. That is, some clients are able to benefit from patronage opportunities to a greater extent than others.

Section conclusion: District creation worsens decentralisation's existing challenges

Overall, participants in the research conducted for this thesis argued that district proliferation worsens the existing issues of decentralisation: that the creation of new districts generates worse fiscal pressure, worse understaffing, and worse over-burdening by administrative and wage costs. This finding supports the existing literature on district proliferation in the Ugandan context. Furthermore, the rapid creation of additional districts increases the transaction costs of service delivery at the sub-national level. The disadvantages to district proliferation are well-known, being discussed freely by both central- and sub-national interview participants and by representatives of civil society. Senior officials at central agencies such as MoFPED readily critique the rapid creation of additional districts – to the extent that a moratorium on the creation of new districts was announced in 2013. Nonetheless, since 2015 with the end of the moratorium on the creation of new districts, 22 new districts have been announced for commencement in 2016 to 2019. The correlation between the creation of new districts and the national election cycle points to the patronage and clientelism opportunities that elected leaders have come to associate with the creation of new districts.[532]

As described in section 4.1, the creation of new districts is justified by elected leaders and administrative officials alike via claims of too-large population sizes; of inaccessible services; and via claims of insurmountable differences between tribal identities within one district. Unofficial, though widely acknowledged, additional drivers

[532] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.

are political motivations and the desire of elite actors to establish and maintain patronage networks. In this sense, the results of the fieldwork for this thesis are in accordance with broader literature regarding the use of decentralisation for achieving political clientelism goals in sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. This thesis explores a further question regarding the specific context of Uganda: why the creation of additional districts continues, despite the widely-acknowledged problems for public financial management that are generated by district proliferation. The following section 6.5 addresses this question.

6.5 Multi-actor motivations for district proliferation: Moving beyond elite perspectives

The continual creation of additional districts has been a noteworthy feature of the Ugandan political economy, in particular since multi-party elections began in 2006. While current explanations for the proliferation of new districts have focused on the incentives driving and motivating elite actors to seek additional districts, such as establishing patronage networks, less attention has been paid to the incentives of other actors. The results of the household survey conducted in six villages, as described in Chapter Five, draw attention to the challenges faced by villagers at the household level, relating to low-quality or absent public services and utilities. Results from the household survey also suggest ways in which community members seek to find solutions and strategies to overcome these challenges, including through establishing private, individual solutions. Key strategies that emerge from the survey results include households developing private solutions to shortfalls in public utilities, and groups beginning to identify closely with those of their own tribe and differentiating from neighbours of different tribal identities. Furthermore, the results obtained for this thesis suggest that the rapid creation of new districts can be viewed through the prism of a strategy for attempting to gain access to the resources of the state.

This section presents an analysis of the factors driving actors from the highest levels to the grassroot of the Ugandan political economy: from senior central-government political leaders, to villagers in remote rural areas. By including the viewpoints of those at the grassroot, this research identifies the incentives of a broader range of actors in seeking the creation of additional districts, in a way that extends the research in the existing literature. It will be argued that there are other explanations for district proliferation that are not identified in the existing body of literature. Specifically, beginning with the political elite at the central level, this section describes the incentives of elites through the prism of political survival. Turning then to the incentives driving those at the sub-district and household levels, this section introduces the concept of an access strategy: the strategies non-elite actors put into place to gain access to resources. District proliferation is then framed through these two prisms: the political survival strategies of elite actors, and the economic access

strategies of non-elite actors, to create a multifaceted examination of this phenomenon.

Elite drivers of district proliferation: Political actors and political survival

Beginning with a top-down analysis of the drivers of district proliferation, this section examines the incentives and motivations driving political elites: those for whom district proliferation is a crucial element of their political survival.[533] The motivations of senior government leaders are analysed, utilising the results of elite interviews undertaken in Kampala, as well as viewpoints in the existing literature. Secondly, the motivations of district-level elites are identified, utilising commentary from interviews conducted with this group themselves, as well as in interviews with central-level public servants. It will be highlighted that the interaction between political factors and decentralisation generates new-district creation, despite the financial issues this causes. This is because political survival is prioritised over avoiding the financial burdens created by new districts.

Incentives of senior leadership: Political survival through control of sub-national areas

The senior political leadership in Uganda – the President, Cabinet, Members of Parliament, and NRM representatives – utilise the creation of additional districts in order to generate and maintain political power. Through the strategic creation of additional districts – strategic in terms of both timing and location – political leaders are able to improve the likelihood of their own political survival. District proliferation assists elected leaders to: gain favour from the electorate; expand the number of seats they hold in Parliament; disempower their political rivals; and ensure that sub-national level politicians are not able to become sufficiently powerful to pose a challenge to their rule. This discussion reflects broader literature on political clientelism and decentralisation throughout countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in which political leaders are described as implementing decentralisation in ways that suit and support their own political objectives.[534] This section discusses each of these methods in turn.

[533] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'; Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[534] Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*.

Firstly, for the President, the creation of additional districts provides the opportunity to be seen to 'give' a district to a community. As depicted below in Image 6, the announcements of additional districts are generally made by the President personally, rather than by a parliamentary spokesperson or Minister for Local Government. As a result, the decision to create an additional district in a specific location is one that the President is seen to personally control and announce.

Image 6: President Museveni speaking at an NRM campaign rally and announcing the creation of an additional 19 districts, 16 December 2016

In this sense, the President is able to generate the greatest patronage advantage from the creation of new districts and sub-counties. By being seen to be the 'giver' of new sub-national units, the President is able to place himself at the core

of this patronage mechanism.[535] As described by Eaton,[536] the President is incentivised to deliver additional districts as a form of patronage, even despite the fiscal damage caused by district proliferation, as a way of developing a political advantage in the short term.

In a similar vein, for MPs – particularly those seeking to be re-elected – there is a strong incentive for them to agree to demands from their electorates for the creation of an additional district. In this regard, the findings of the fieldwork undertaken for this thesis are in accord with the existing literature relating to political clientelism.[537] As described in Chapters Four and Five, a common demand from households is for the creation of an additional district, as a perceived path to gaining access to public services, and as a potential mechanism for drawing resources 'nearer to the people'. In the lead-up to national parliamentary elections, in particular, members of the Parliament and Cabinet may feel especially tempted to agree to 'giving' additional sub-national administrative units in a particular location[538] – or even to offer the creation of a new district voluntarily, as described by respondents to the household survey.[539] In these circumstances, members of parliament who are seeking re-election may travel to regions within their electorate and indicate that, if elected, they will arrange for the creation of new administrative units in that area. There is therefore a tacit understanding of the mutual benefits – the clientelist exchange – underpinning district creation.[540] A senior official in the LGFC described[541] this situation as follows:

> The law, the constitution, has a provision which says that when the people demand, their demand should be considered. But now when it becomes very political, then it depends on those who are in power

[535] Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*
[536] Eaton, 'Political Obstacles to Decentralisation: Evidence from Argentina and the Philippines'.
[537] Boone, 'Decentralization As Political Strategy In West Africa'; Eaton, 'Political Obstacles to Decentralisation: Evidence from Argentina and the Philippines'; Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*
[538] Stokes, *Political Clientelism*; Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'; Scott, 'Decentralisation, Local Development and Social Cohesion: An Analytical Review'.
[539] This was especially commonly reported among respondents in Pallisa, where a new district was created and commenced in 2017.
[540] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[541] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 69. 10 May 2016.

– whether they want political survival. When they want survival, they will give a district.

For NRM, the ruling party, the creation of additional districts also represents an opportunity to generate political capital. Analysis by Green[542] indicates that electorates in newly-created districts are more likely to vote for NRM; the creation of new districts can thus act as a mechanism for gaining or retaining seats in forthcoming elections.[543] In addition, district proliferation contributes to the large number of MPs in the Ugandan Parliament: at 426 seats, one of Africa's largest per-capita.[544] The creation of an additional district does not generate an additional seat for a 'regular' member of parliament, because the borders of electorates for regular MPs do not coincide with district boundaries. However, the electorates for seats that are designated for female candidates (referred to as "Woman MPs") coincide with district boundaries. Thus, the creation of an additional district generates an additional electorate for a Woman MP, and an additional seat in the national parliament.[545] There is thus a substantial incentive in place for the NRM government, which already holds a commanding majority in parliament, to welcome the creation of additional districts in areas of strong NRM support – that is, areas where NRM can be reasonably confident that the creation of an additional seat for a Woman MP will result in an NRM candidate being elected to that seat.

Thus, the creation of a new district in an area that traditionally shows strong support for NRM can generate two benefits for the ruling party. Firstly, the popular decision to create a new district is likely to guarantee the re-election of the 'regular' MP. Secondly, an additional Woman MP seat will be created that is likely to then be won by an NRM candidate. This will generate an additional NRM-held seat in the national parliament. A professor at Makerere University explains[546] this process:

> The only reason, and the only logical explanation for the creation of new districts in Uganda is political expediency. Basically, gathering

[542] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'.
[543] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*; Schmidt et al., *Friends, Followers, and Factions*.
[544] Oluka, 'How Ugandan MPs' Pay Compares with Counterparts' Worldwide'.
[545] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[546] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 76. 20 May 2016.

> more support, for rallying more support, for the ruling government, for the party in power. And that's all. Because any new district means that you are going to get, one, there's the few elites to be employed. OK? And then you are also going to get more cadres for the NRM government, and that is a fact – because most of them are created in those areas where the current government has support. … they go to the rural areas, that's where the current NRM party has a lot of support – that's where they split the districts.

In addition to advantages created for NRM overall, MPs may see personal advantages in awarding a new district to their constituency. The creation of an additional district will necessarily involve reducing the size of existing districts within an MP's constituency, as a new district will be 'carved out' from the land area of existing districts. From the point of view of the MP for that region, this means that each district within their constituency is now smaller – meaning that the powerful local elites within those districts have a smaller power base from which to draw authority and resources. An MP who is concerned about the power bases of local elites within their electorate, therefore, may be likely to support the creation of a larger number of weaker districts within their electorate, in order to face less competition for power, or contestation of decisions, from these elites. In other words, as described by Eaton,[547] an MP might be tempted to support the creation of new districts because they identify short-term benefits for themselves from supporting a clientelist policy of this nature. The creation of additional districts can in fact empower a national MP relative to senior leaders at the district level. This is explained[548] by a Principal Economist at the World Bank's Kampala headquarters:

> When Uganda had, like, 69 districts, most of these districts were very big. …. So a district chairman who was elected through universal adult suffrage would be controlling 4 or 5 parliamentary constituencies. And, he or she would have a large revenue base, and a large population he is managing. And politically, he was very powerful, compared to a national member of parliament who

[547] Eaton, 'Political Obstacles to Decentralisation: Evidence from Argentina and the Philippines'.
[548] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.

> legislates. OK? Now. I think … this in a way ruffled the feathers of people in the central government. Because a member of parliament could not go in his constituency and do anything without going through a district chairman. The central government could not give directives to districts, because the districts were large, the districts had the financial muscles, to finance a substantial percentage of its budget. So, I think the move by parliament to deliberately create smaller districts – most of Uganda's districts now are one parliamentary constituency per district. …. So for me, one of the views I am putting forward is that parliament deliberately went for the proliferation of districts to undermine the political and financial strength of hitherto big districts.

Overall, the incentives of national elites in supporting decentralisation in general, and district proliferation specifically, depend on their understanding of their role in a clientelist and patronage-based system. When national elite politicians are able to discern an political advantage for themselves in supporting these policies, they are likely to do so, even if they may change their strategy later if these policies no longer generate a benefit for them.[549] In other words, rather than support the creation of new districts on the basis of this being the best policy outcome for achieving service delivery or community participation (as decentralisation is aiming to achieve), politicians act primarily in their own political interests.[550]

District elites: Maintaining political power and resisting rivals through the creation of new districts

From the perspective of local elites, there are strong incentives in place to lobby for the creation of additional districts in their local area. Firstly, for members of the elite who are not yet a part of the political or administrative leadership of the district, there are potential benefits to be captured from the creation of a new district, as they may

[549] Eaton, 'Political Obstacles to Decentralisation: Evidence from Argentina and the Philippines'.
[550] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.

themselves then be able to become part of the leadership of the new district. This may be particularly the case from a patronage perspective if they are known to be supportive of, or affiliated with, the NRM.[551] This means that these individuals will be able to benefit from permanent and secure employment with a reliable wage, a position with high social status within society, and access to resources such as an office, vehicle, fuel, computers and reliable electricity. Once employed in a district government, local elites are able to use this position to offer resources and employment opportunities to their own kinship networks, and in so doing, create their own patronage network at the sub-national level.[552] A Senior Economist at MoFPED describes[553] this situation:

> Politically, we see these small, small groups, and the leaders, those leaders who want to gain their political base, and they think that once you have a district, then I can be chairman LC5, I will have autonomy, things like that.

Secondly, for members of the leadership of an existing district, particularly those in elected roles such as councillors, there are also significant incentives in place to lobby for the creation of additional districts. For elected leaders who fear that they are losing political support and may lose their council seat at a forthcoming election, there are substantial incentives to lobby for their district to be split into two. An Assistant Commissioner at MoFPED describes[554] his perspective that district elites campaign for the creation of districts in areas where they can be confident of gaining political support:

> That is in line with those districts which are politically – politically created. Because, some members might feel that if they stood in one district they would lose, because a certain sub-county does not support them. So they agitate for an independent district, so that they stay on the side where they can be elected. That is not the best way of how to allocate districts!

[551] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.
[552] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[553] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 59. 03 May 2016.
[554] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 24. 05 April 2016.

Section conclusion: Gaining and maintaining political control

This section has discussed the ways in which elite actors at the central and district levels utilise district proliferation in order to increase, and then maintain, their levels of power and control. In this sense, the results of research conducted for this thesis broadly aligns with those views found in the existing literature:[555] that district proliferation is undertaken by elites in order to create and maintain patronage networks. New districts are created in order to reward allies of the NRM, as an employment strategy for an aspiring politician, or to generate support for the NRM amongst the population.[556] In addition to this perspective, this research contends that in the context of a hybrid regime, the politicisation of district proliferation extends to a political survival mechanism. For central-government elites, the creation of an additional district allows for the extension of patronage networks to the district level, but also allows the central government to divide political rivals from one another and so limit their access to resources. The creation of a new district allows the central government to be seen by the voting population as gifting new districts to them, as an act of both generosity and control.[557] Finally, the creation of a new district creates additional parliamentary seats, and increases the probability of retaining both new and existing seats for NRM. District elites are able to gain power in a newly-created district, or to maintain their existing power base as the creation of new districts reduces competition for these powerful roles.

Overall, the top-down supply of new districts by elite politicians is motivated by goals of political survival, as well as of access to economic resources. The following section describes the perspectives of those at the grassroot, and examines the implications of the creation of new districts from their demand-side perspective.

[555] For example, in Elliott Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45, no. 1 (1 March 2010): 83–103, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-009-9058-8; and Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000567.
[556] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*; Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[557] Medina and Stokes, 'Clientelism as Political Monopoly'.

6.6 The perspective of the grassroot: District proliferation as an access strategy for rural livelihoods

Amongst authors[558] who have researched the creation of additional districts, a common framing of the issue is that it is undertaken by elite actors in order to create and maintain patronage networks at the sub-national level. The research undertaken for this thesis sought to contribute to this literature by addressing the demand-side of district creation, and include the perspectives of citizens at the household level. This research asked which goals, priorities and incentives might drive those at the village level in the studied sites to seek the creation of additional districts. In this section, it will be argued that villagers who participated in the household survey seek the creation of new districts in order to improve their rural livelihoods strategies, to gain visibility in the public-finance system, and to create a claim on the delivery of public services.

New districts as a claim on service delivery

At the level of the village, respondents to the household-level survey conducted for this thesis indicated that even though they may acknowledge that there are potentially too many districts in Uganda at present, they would nevertheless be pleased if a new district were to be created where they reside. Sixty-nine per cent of respondents to the household survey responded that they would be happy if a district were created in the area in which they live, even though in answer to an earlier question, 38 per cent answered that they feel that Uganda has too many districts at present. At first glance, this result appears to be contradictory. However, the explanatory comments made by respondents indicate that respondents feel that the creation of an additional district is the most successful strategy for them to be able to obtain additional services in their district. That is, respondents argue that in order to

[558] Examples authors who emphasise this framing include: Elliott Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda', *Crisis States Working Papers Series* 2 (2008b); Diana Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006', *Advisory Board for Irish Aid: Working Paper 2*, 2007, 67; Janet I. Lewis, 'When Decentralization Leads to Recentralization: Subnational State Transformation in Uganda', *Regional & Federal Studies* 24, no. 5 (2014): 571–88; Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217; and R Vokes and S Wilkins, 'Party, Patronage and Coercion in NRM's 2016 Re Election in Uganda: Imposed or Embedded?', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, no. 4 (2016): 581–600.

obtain services such as a healthcare post or primary school near to their home, a district must be created first, and then services “will be brought”. Respondents argued that when a new district is created, "There will [be] creation of more services like hospitals, school and many others"[559]; "They lead to developmental activities"[560]; and "When a district is created, there's a possibility that a referral hospital will be built and good roads will be constructed"[561].

The basis for this belief is that politicians describe the process of creating additional districts, and of decentralisation itself, as bringing resources and services ‘nearer to the people’. For example, when explaining the need for a new Namisindwa District[562] to be split from Manafwa District, the LC5 Chair and local MP described the local hilly terrain that causes challenges for residents to access services. A new district is therefore necessary for new districts to be created that are nearer to the population.[563] Because politicians frame the creation of new districts in this manner, members of the villages in the studied districts in turn perceive that the creation of new districts will deliver improved services. A Senior Economist at MoFPED here explains[564] the rationale behind villagers’ campaigns for the creation of an additional district in their area:

> The main reason [for the creation of a new district] is to make sure that services are brought nearer to the population. OK? The thinking is, if I have a district in my own locality, OK, then, issues to do with the transport network, issues to do with the health facilities and services, the education services, will be looked at more closely.

[559] Response to household survey question 92. Household 1, Village 6 (Ntungamo District).
[560] Response to household survey question 92. Household 2, Village 4 (Lira District).
[561] Response to household survey question 92. Household 4, Village 1 (Pallisa District).
[562] Namisindwa District was subsequently created, and came into effect on 1 July 2017.
[563] Anon. ‘Manafwa Leaders Want District Approved’. *New Vision,* 6 May 2010. https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1290781/manafwa-leaders-district-approved
[564] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 59. 03 May 2016.

In fact, the perception of participants in the survey is in accordance with formal governance regulations regarding service delivery standards.[565] The minimum standards for public service delivery in Uganda prescribe that there should be one Health Centre 2 (HC2)[566] and one primary school for each parish. For sub-counties, there is to be one secondary school and Health Centre Three (HC3)[567] per sub-county, that can provide emergency, maternity and diagnostic medical care.[568] A senior officer in the LGFC adds[569] his views on the benefits that can be derived at the grassroot level from the creation of additional districts:

> We have created standards – some sector standards – and many of them would favour local governments splitting. For example, if you are a district of, like, 500,000 people, and getting bigger every year, and then there is a small district of, like, 100,000 people, when it is being given some resources like road equipment, there is no consideration of, like, that this one has more people and more roads – you should give it more graders. They give one grader per district. Then, this is said, We should balance, ah, if we split we will get five graders, you see? If we split into five-five.

There are numerous examples presented in national media reporting of new districts being created in Uganda following demands made by local communities. Often, these demands are explicitly linked to arguments about poor-quality service delivery in the residents' current district. Community members undertake this lobbying for a new district in a number of ways, including delivering petitions to Parliament, or requesting a new district directly from the District Council of their current district. In other cases, local MPs argue on the floor of parliament that a new district or sub-county

[565] The author is not meaning to suggest that villagers in the household survey are necessarily aware of these regulations (though some Council members may be). Rather, the perception held by villagers that the creation of a new districts causes new services to be provided would be accurate, if the practice of service delivery and public finance did follow the formal regulations that stipulate that specific services will be provided by specific levels of government.
[566] An HC2 is able to provide preventive, promotive, outpatient and curative health services, and emergency maternity delivery.
[567] An HC3 is able to provide the same health services as an HC2, with the addition of maternity, inpatient and laboratory services.
[568] 'Service Standards and Service Delivery Standards for the Health Sector 2016 | Knowledge Management Portal'.
[569] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 69. 10 May 2016.

should be created within their constituency.[570] Some examples are as follows. Kagadi and Kakumiro Districts were split from Kibaale District in 2016, following a period of sustained campaigning by the local community to the District Council, and then by the Council to the community's local Members of Parliament. In Bughendera District, residents repeatedly presented petitions to the Speaker of Parliament before being granted a district in 2016. In Bududa District, residents argued for several years that poor service delivery was provided by Mbale District, and that this could only be remedied by a new district being created for them; they further pointed to the then-recent creation of Manafwa District (also splitting form Mbale) in 2005 as evidence of the poor services provided by Mbale District. The creation of Bududa District was announced in 2010, at a campaign rally in the lead-up to the 2011 election. In each of these cases, the decision by the central government to grant these new districts was announced by President Museveni personally, at a campaign rally in that location, in the lead-up to a national election.

Furthermore, respondents to interviews and to the household survey reveal that villagers have come to think of the creation of a new district or lower local government near to where they live, as being synonymous with development itself. Viewed from the point of view of the citizen, the creation of new districts has become the way in which sub-national development is operationalised. Because the creation of an additional district implies the eventual creation of new service-delivery points for that community, and the potential for new employment opportunities, district creation and local-level development appear to be identical when viewed from the perspective of the citizen. For example, a respondent to the household survey described Uganda as follows: "We are more developed now. We are over 100 districts now; we used to be only 30." Of the sixty-nine percent of respondents who answered *Yes* when asked, Would you be happy if a new district were created in this area?, 36 per cent of respondents answered that their reason for giving this answer was that public services would then be brought to the area. In expanded answers, reasons given included "because it brings development", "because there is a chance of development with a

[570] An example of this practice is the advocacy of Tororo County MP, Geoffrey Ekanya, for Tororo County to be elevated to the status of a district. Uganda Radio Network, 'Tororo Residents Threaten Strike Over New District', 23 July 2012. https://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/tororo-residents-threaten-strike-over-new-district

new district", and "a new district may mean development for us". This concept is discussed in more detail in section 7.3.

However, a key respondent at the World Bank's Kampala office explains[571] his frustration with this argument, describing the way in which villagers have come to believe that obtaining a new district will automatically generate benefits for their village:

> I know of certain districts which have only nine percent staffing. What can you do with that? You know? It is there in name, and for me it would be much better if government says, OK, instead of creating this district, let us do a health centre in this locality, or let us construct a primary or secondary school, which is fully funded, which has staff houses, which has facilities to make sure that the people there get education services. So, for me, I think the policy is twisted, and it is being turned like that because there are political dividends, rather than service dividends, which people can get.

While villagers in the studied sites may perceive that the creation of an additional district will lead to new resources and services being provided to their community, in line with what has been suggested to them by elected leaders, some authors[572] have found that in fact, new districts perform more poorly in terms of service delivery than established districts. The belief that villagers in the studied locations have placed in the creation of new districts, that this will lead to the improvement of services and communication with government, is perhaps a greater reflection of the arguments made by elected leaders (including by the President) than representative of fiscal reality. However, this is not necessarily a barrier to the use of district proliferation for clientelist purposes by national leaders. Leaders' clientelist goals can be achieved, regardless of whether the perceptions of community members about the benefits that will accrue to them from supporting the ruling party are accurate; only that they support the ruling party is important.[573]

[571] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016.
[572] Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.
[573] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.

Overall, the creation of a new district is thought by community members to make a community more visible within the public finance system,[574] which will then generate the delivery of public services. Residents have observed that requests for the creation of a new district are frequently acted upon, as the creation of new districts is often widely publicised by political leaders. These results suggest that the proliferation of new districts is driven by the failure of decentralisation to deliver improved service delivery to a particular location. In the absence of good-quality services, villagers seek the creation of a new district in order to 'intensify' decentralisation. The creation of additional districts, it is believed, will draw resources and services nearer to the grassroot, and so improve development at the village level. However, as will be discussed in the following section, the creation of new districts can also worsen social divisions and inequalities.

Club goods and common goods: A model for explaining household preferences

An analogy for understanding the puzzle of why actors throughout the Ugandan political economy continue to argue for the creation of additional districts and sub-counties, despite the known disadvantages of district proliferation, can be found in the economic concept of 'club goods'. Club goods are identified where groups of individuals come together to derive a mutual benefit, on the basis of shared characteristics.[575] Members may be able to access a resource, or a patronage opportunity, based on their membership of the group.[576] A club good is excludable,[577] but only becomes rival[578] in the case of large numbers of members; greater benefits accrue to members of a club with a small number of fellow members. Viewed in this way, the creation of a new district creates benefits to members who are members of the club, such as being resident in the district. Accordingly, given that greater benefits

[574] For example, each district is represented by a funding line in the National Budget Framework Paper. As a result, MoFPED will allocate funding to new districts as part of the Local Government Votes.
[575] Cornes and Sandler (1996) – The Theory of Externalities, Public Goods and Club Goods, page 5.
[576] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[577] Individuals who are not members of the club can be excluded from realising its benefits.
[578] A good is rivalrous when consumption of the good by one individual reduces the quantity of the good that can be utilised by other individuals. For club goods, resources only become rivalrous when the club has a large number of members.

accrue to the group when membership is small, members realise greater benefits from smaller districts.

Conversely, the total of resources that are available in the national budget process are analogous to a common good, in that they are rival but non-excludable. That is, the creation of additional districts through the budget process draws on the resources of the national budget, through increased demand for wages, office space and equipment, and vehicles and fuel. It may also necessitate the delivery of additional public services, in line with national service standards. The continual creation of additional districts, despite the financial challenges and pressures this practice is known to create, demonstrates that there are insufficient controls on access to the resources of the national budget process. Access to resources is granted based on persuasion or personal connection, in a patronage-based system,[579] rather than on a cost-benefit analysis.[580] In the absence of strict controls on the creation of new districts, and so limits to budgetary pressures this causes, the national budget envelope effectively becomes non-excludable. However, these resources remain rival, in that their use for one purpose prevents their use for another purpose. As a non-excludable but rival good, the budget envelope is at risk of over-consumption and depletion.

This comparison of the process of district creation to the ideas of club and common goods suggests why district proliferation may continue, despite its widely-acknowledged worsening of fiscal pressures. The common pool of the national budget process is over-consumed as a result of the establishment of many club goods, in the form of districts. From the perspective of those who derive a benefit from the creation of a new district, there is an incentive to be a member of a group that has access to a resource, even where the large number of these same club goods is in turn depleting that same common resource. For those who are unable to gain membership of the club, it may be difficult to capture the benefits generated by the creation of a new district. That is, there is the risk of inequality worsening between insiders (elites) and outsiders (non-elites) of the club good of a new district; social exclusion may worsen

[579] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.
[580] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.

following the creation of new districts. Section 7.4 discusses these concepts in greater detail.

Section conclusion: Drivers of new districts at the grassroot

From the perspective of citizens living at the household level in six studied villages, the creation of an additional district can bring the promise of development. In locations where services have not been successfully delivered, and governments are not responsive to the complaints of households, the creation of a new district can be a step towards gaining resources from the state. Far from being passive recipients of governance institutions, villagers have understood the claim by politicians that new districts bring services nearer to the people, and have observed that when elected leaders commit to delivering a new district, this promise is frequently fulfilled. In seeking the intensification of decentralisation – the creation of a new district – villagers have the expectation that this district can form the basis for future service delivery. Villagers see the delivery of public services as a way of improving their rural livelihoods, and gaining access to resources, but have become frustrated by the unfulfilled promises of politicians to deliver these services. Accordingly, villagers at the grassroot level have begun to leverage the political aspirations of election candidates to seek the creation of new districts, in order to improve villagers' economic and livelihood strategies. In this manner, the political economy of village-level actors has affected decentralisation in a manner that results in the proliferation of new districts.

6.7 Chapter conclusion: Improving decentralisation through additional districts, and the pursuit of personal interest

The benefits that are thought to be generated by the implementation of decentralisation, such as greater responsiveness of government to community priorities, and greater participation of communities in governance, require careful implementation. However, the results obtained through this research suggest that poor-quality services, low levels of participation in governance at the sub-national level, and poor responsiveness of governments to local development priorities persist. Given these limitations, a policy challenge is to determine whether decentralisation in the Ugandan context would be improved through implementing decentralisation to a greater extent, or improving its current implementation processes.[581]

Those who advocate for decentralisation to be implemented in its current form but with greater attention to quality ('better' decentralisation) argue for modifications such as improved monitoring and supervision of local governments. Primarily central-government actors, these key informants argue that the challenge for decentralisation is not its current form, but the performance and capacity of those who implement it. Conversely, those who argue for decentralisation to be implemented more intensively ('more' decentralisation) argue that decentralisation is not yet delivering on its core rationales because it has not been implemented with sufficient intensity. According to this argument, districts are currently still too large for improvements in participation, responsiveness and the quality of service delivery to have been delivered. The appropriate manner to improve decentralisation, then, is to continue to create additional districts, and in so doing to bring the site of government activity yet nearer to the population. When combined with the political motivations of elected officials and the resource-access motivations of non-elite actors, the drive towards new districts becomes a compelling force.

[581] Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.

However, the problems caused by district proliferation are widely acknowledged within this research and within the wider literature[582] – to the extent that a moratorium on the creation of new districts was put in place between 2013 and 2015. Nonetheless, the creation of additional districts continues; the argument for 'more' decentralisation dominates the argument for 'better' decentralisation. In other words, the research conducted for this thesis reveals that where there is a necessary trade-off between political benefits of district proliferation, and the economic cost of new districts, the achievement of political goals is outweighing economic goals. The following chapter discusses a framework for how these incentives of different actors throughout the political economy coalesce around the formation of additional districts.

[582] Diana Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006', *Advisory Board for Irish Aid: Working Paper 2*, 2007; Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.

Chapter Seven:

District proliferation:
Coinciding incentives for political survival, resources access and livelihoods

> Until someone puts their foot down [against district proliferation], it's a proven vote-winner, so I don't see any change until .... You know, until there's demand for a new settlement. So, it's, you know, that's the reality you've got to live with.
>
> *- Civil society economist,*[583] *Kampala*

7.1 Introduction: Multi-actor strategies in pursuit of district proliferation

The creation of new districts and sub-counties in Uganda has significantly changed the scale of decentralised governance since decentralisation was introduced in the late 1980s. There are now nearly four times the number of districts in Uganda as in 1986, and there appears to be no reduction in new-district creation in the near future. As described in section 6.4, the rapid creation of additional districts brings with it a range of challenges in public financial management, and has been criticised by a range of actors. Interviews conducted for this thesis revealed that these criticisms are widely acknowledged, and in some cases shared, by senior officials within central government.[584] Concerns amongst senior officials about the cost of new districts reached the extent that a moratorium on the creation of additional districts was established in 2013 (before being abandoned in 2015). As described in Chapter One, this generates a puzzle: what explains thee continued proliferation of new administrative units, despite the widely-acknowledged issues this causes?

[583] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 78. 26 May 2016.
[584] 'Stop Creating New Districts-Muhakanizi Tells Gov't – Press Ug', accessed 5 July 2018, http://pressug.com/stop-creating-new-districts-muhakanizi-tells-govt/.

As described in section 6.5, there are a range of motivations and incentives driving the actions of individuals across the Ugandan political economy. While a number of previous studies of the phenomenon of district proliferation in Uganda have focused on the motivations of elite actors, particularly in relation to maintaining sub-national patronage networks,[585] the research conducted for this thesis was inclusive of the perspectives of individuals at the household level, and other non-elite actors. Accordingly, this research reveals that the impetus for the creation of new districts comes from a wide range of actors in Ugandan society, beyond central-government elites. Both non-elite and elite actors in the Ugandan context perceive that they will benefit from the creation of new districts, and accordingly, act in pursuit of maximising these benefits.

It was argued in Chapter Six that the creation of additional districts is driven by two types of strategies being pursued by actors in the political economy. Firstly, elected officials are implementing a strategy to ensure their political survival. By lobbying for, and implementing, the supply of new districts and sub-counties, elected leaders have utilised the decentralisation process in order to maximise their political survival. That is, the creation of new districts is being used to support the clientelist strategies of the state.[586] Secondly, for non-elite actors, including those at the village level, the creation of additional districts contributes to these actors' perceived ability to access resources of the state. That is, household-level and non-elite actors seek the creation of a new district in order to enact their own access and livelihoods strategies. In this way, decentralisation is intensified (via the creation of additional districts), in order to support the economic goals of non-elite actors in the community.

This Chapter will discuss the ways in which the varying incentives of a wide range of actors coincide and intersect with one another, and how this intersection drives the creation of new districts. Overall, both the supply of new districts by political actors, and demand for new districts from community members, drive the phenomenon of district proliferation. The creation of new districts is thus framed as the outcome of the interaction between decentralisation and the political economy in

[585] See for example: Elliott Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda', 2008, 442.
[586] Stokes, *Political Clientelism*.

Uganda: the coinciding incentives and motivations of a range of actors generate both supply of and demand for additional districts to be created.

7.2 Coincidence of incentives: When political and economic interests coincide

For elite actors in high-status positions and for members of households at the village level, and for a range of actors in between these poles, the creation of new districts is perceived to deliver benefits and advantages. As described in section 6.5, actors at varying levels of the political-economic hierarchy in Uganda have individual incentives to seek the creation of new administrative units. This section discusses the process by which these individual priorities generate change in the way decentralisation is implemented, in a manner that generates the rapid creation of new sub-national units.

The individuals whose interests are advanced by the creation of new districts are disparate, and not easily categorised. Indeed, the actions of these actors cannot be said to be collective, in the sense of forming a group with a common goal, and advocating collectively for the achievement of that goal. Individuals in this context are acting for their own benefit, but since this benefit is best served by a single outcome – the creation of a new sub-national unit – the individual actions of many actors form a common movement. Demands for new districts come from household-level actors, who perceive this to be an opportunity to them to access service delivery. Demand is also driven by district elites, for whom the creation of new districts may bring patronage-based opportunities for formal employment.[587] The supply of new districts is driven by central-government political actors, who see in new districts the opportunity to capture votes, and to expand a patronage network. In this sense, individuals' actions are in cooperation with one another, even though this may be coincidental.[588] By seeking to advance their own goals and motivations, actors' overlapping and coinciding incentives lead to advocacy for the same outcome. Given the number of actors attempting to achieve the same goal, this force becomes powerful.

[587] Muno, 'Conceptualizing and Measuring Clientelism'.
[588] Grossman and Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation'. These authors discuss the way in which a confluence of interests between central-government elites and district-level elites in marginalised areas can generate recentralisation through the creation of many, under-resourced, administrative units.

Indeed, these coinciding incentives are powerful enough to generate changes in national public policies regarding decentralisation and district proliferation. Specifically, the national government decided in 2015 to overturn its own moratorium on the creation of additional districts, which had been established in 2013.[589] Having at first been persuaded that the fiscal cost of creating new districts was excessive, the new-district creation should cease, the government was in 2015 persuaded that the benefits of the creation of new districts outweigh these costs. As explained in an article[590] in the *Daily Monitor* newspaper on 17 December 2015:

> President Museveni yesterday promised his government will lift the moratorium on the creation of new districts, pledging that there is a "long list" of districts to be created in 2017. The announcement marks a change of heart by the President who announced a freeze on the creation of new districts in 2013, arguing that they were too expensive to bankroll amid a flurry of demands for the new administrative units around the country. Campaigning in Bubulo West, Manafwa District, Mr Museveni assured residents, who are demanding a district be carved out of Manafwa and named Namisindwa,[591] that their request will be granted if he secures a fifth term next year.

Policies relating to new-district creation thus shifted from a policy against the creation of new districts, to one in which new districts are being created at a rapid rate, as a result of the coinciding economic and political interests of a wide range of actors. These incentives, once combined, have become sufficiently powerful that they outweigh widespread criticisms and complaints about the problems caused by district proliferation. The interaction between political-economy forces and decentralisation has resulted in district proliferation, despite the well-known disadvantages this poses for fiscal control. This argument will be discussed in greater detail in the following section 7.3.

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[589] 'Districts: Moratorium Ordered!', www.newvision.co.ug, accessed 13 July 2018, http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1315640/districts-moratorium.
[590] 'Museveni Pledges New Districts'.
[591] Namisindwa District was created, and came into effect on 1 July 2017.

7.3 District proliferation at the grassroot: Access, livelihood and development

This section presents a detailed analysis of the incentives of actors described in section 7.2, and illustrates that while these incentives are disparate and heterogeneous in nature, their shared outcome is the creation of additional districts. Throughout the Ugandan political and economic hierarchy – from the village to the most senior levels of political leadership – incentives are in place that generate the demand for, and supply of, new districts. This section contextualises the results of fieldwork undertaken for this thesis within the existing body of literature and theory. It introduces a theoretical model of an access strategy for the household level; argues that increased hierarchisation is being generated at the district level; and relates senior politicians' behaviour to models of political survival.

Villagers: district proliferation as an access strategy

From the point of view of villagers – those who are the end-users of public services, and whose livelihoods chiefly derive from rural agricultural production – the overarching concepts and theories of decentralisation may seem very remote. As analysed by the household survey, for members of rural households in the studied sites, the ideals of participatory democracy or engagement with district governments are rendered relatively meaningless. For the households that participated in the survey, concerns at the village level centre on elements of survival: gaining access to farming assets and expertise; affording school fees; the future employment options available to children; whether healthcare services are available and affordable. Respondents to the household survey undertaken in three districts responded to the question *What do you think are the most important development priorities for this district?* with answers including: "Health services and promoting people's welfare. People can be given livestock to improve their livelihood";[592] "Agriculture. Health, providing mosquito nets and spraying insecticide, immunisation";[593] and "Government projects should focus on agriculture".[594] For these villagers, questions of access to resources and obtaining the basic elements of survival are fundamental, and dominate

[592] Survey participant in Village 2 (Pallisa District).
[593] Survey participant in Village 2 (Pallisa District).
[594] Survey participant in Village 6 (Ntungamo District).

concerns of engaging with government for the purposes of improving the quality of decision-making. These comments and viewpoints were broadly consistent across the studied sites, despite the broader economic and social differences in the contexts of northern, western and eastern Uganda.

Village-level approaches to accessing resources and generating livelihoods

Areas of the existing literature[595] on decentralisation focus on the importance of local governments engaging with local communities in decision-making, such as in undertaking participatory budgeting. This thesis builds on this literature to ask what advantages villagers see for themselves from the decentralisation process, and how they perceive their role in this engagement with government. In order to address this issue, the research undertaken for this thesis asks whether communities in fact see other ways that they can derive benefits from decentralisation, that might be more important or valuable to them than participation in village-level budgeting. Villagers might perceive that there are ways that they can leverage the decentralisation system to improve their access to financial resources, or access to public services:[596] that is, whether villagers can enact what will be called an 'access strategy'. These elements may be of greater relevance to them than being nearer to their local government officials, even though this will also be the case following the creation of an additional sub-national unit. This section analyses the ways in which individuals at the village level perceive that they may be able to capture the benefits of decentralisation in ways that are relevant and important to them, and use the creation of an additional administrative unit to implement an 'access strategy'. From the perspective of those at the village level in the studied sites, the creation of an additional district suggests to villagers that they might be being brought closer to things they need to access to ensure their quality of life: healthcare and education, marketplaces, financial services, tribal leaders.

[595] Such as Lídia Cabral, 'Decentralisation in Africa: Scope, Motivations and Impact on Service Delivery and Poverty', 2011; Celina Souza, 'Political and Financial Decentralisation in Democratic Brazil', *Local Government Studies* 20, no. 4 (1994): 588–609; and Sandrine Perrot et al., *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*, (Fountain Publishers, 2014).
[596] However, as previously noted in Chapter Six, this perception by villagers may not be accurate. Newly-created districts may in fact have lower expenditure on public-service delivery than older districts.

Barriers to participation

For those living at the grassroot level of the political economy, engaging with branches of the formal state can be challenging. Villagers, in particular those who work predominantly in subsistence agriculture, may lack the confidence, education background or social capital to engage with government directly. This lack of interaction may arise from actual disadvantage, such as a lack of literacy, or perceived disadvantage, such as the perception that those who have not attended school do not have the authority to engage with those in powerful positions. Participants in the household survey explain that they do not attend village meetings because they are "not informed" or "not called" for the meeting; "only some participate (only those whose names are written)".[597] Survey respondents report that participation in decision-making by government may not take place at all, or may not be influential over the outcomes of decision-making. In particular, voicing a critical opinion on the quality of governance, such as critiquing the performance of local healthcare facilities, may be difficult for someone who perceives their socio-economic status to be lower than the person with whom they seek to engage, or may attract negative consequences. In addition, household survey participants report frustration when their communications with government do not generate substantive change: "They promised to forward our complaints but no change happened afterwards"[598]; "Nothing changed, the leaders never did anything to address the problem".[599]

As a result of these barriers to consultation and participation, villagers in the studied field sites might not, in practice, seek to engage with government officials or leaders to agitate for improvements to the quality or quantity of services in their local area. Instead, villagers may seek out alternative channels to obtain from government the assets, resources and services they would seek to obtain. Rather than engage directly with governments over the question of service delivery, villagers in these locations see an opportunity to engage with leaders over an alternative question: that of the administrative units in place in their local area. Citizens may feel more comfortable discussing, or feel that they have more right to discuss, the creation of

[597] Response to household survey, question 24. Household 14, village 4 (Lira District).
[598] Response to household survey, question 41. Household 7, village 2 (Pallisa District).
[599] Response to household survey, question 41. Household 13, village 5 (Ntungamo District).

additional districts or sub-counties in their region than discussing issues to do with service delivery directly.[600]

Through this channel, it becomes possible for citizens and politicians to argue that there are insufficient services in a particular region – but without being seen to criticise government – by arguing that the region is too big.[601] Discussions about creating an additional district in order to increase the quantity of local services can be framed in terms of 'objective' measures, such as the population per district, or the number of patients per healthcare centre, that remove the critical element of arguing that there are insufficient services being provided by government.

Linking district creation to service delivery: An access strategy

The causal path between the creation of additional districts and improved access to public services was well-recognised by participants in this research, at both the level of the household and amongst elite respondents. For some research participants, the two factors have become 'merged': references to creating a new district have become an approximation of improving the reach of public services. For example, respondents to the household survey conducted for this thesis answered the question *Would you be happy if another district was created in this area?* with responses including "Yes, because services will be brought nearer to people"; "Yes, because some districts are too big to receive government programs adequately"; and "Yes, because the distance will be shorter compared to now".[602] These responses indicate that participants in the household survey discern a connection between the creation of new districts and new services being 'brought' to the community.[603]

[600] This is implied by respondents to the household survey, who report fears of being persecuted if they raise concerns or complaints about service delivery: "People are taken like they are at fault so most times they keep quiet"; "Fear raising their complaint because you can be taken as someone who is against government services."
[601] This was described in interviews with district-level elected and administrative staff. *Pers.Comm.* Interviews with author, 4 03 February 2016; number 36, 21 April 2016; and number 46, 25 April 2016.
[602] Respondents to the household survey located respectively in: Village 3 (Lira); Village 2 (Pallisa); and Village 2 (Pallisa).
[603] As noted in Chapter 6, this perception may not in fact be accurate: new districts may perform more poorly than older districts in delivering services to the community.

The clear link between these two outcomes in the minds of survey participants has meant that villagers in the studied field sites now perceive that in order to gain access to improved services, a path to achieving this is to gain a new district. District creation has become perceived as an access strategy for gaining access to the provision of public services, because a newly-created district becomes a 'visible' entity in the public finance system. Having become visible, the residents of a district perceive that they may be then able to demand new public services, *on the basis of* being a district.[604] A new district is perceived as the basis for leveraging resources, such as a district budget, and the right to demand the provision of public services in the future. Having drawn a link between the creation of a new district and the delivery of new public services, villagers are then incentivised to seek the delivery of new sub-national units from politicians, and in particular from election candidates. A Senior Economist from MoFPED explains[605] that when he visits towns for planning meetings with elected leaders, he witnesses community members asking their elected leaders for the creation of a new district.

> It [establishing a new district] is not the best way of improving service delivery. But it is mainly driven by... By other strategic objectives of government; mainly political objectives. Because we know the electorate... Whenever you go there, with politicians, the people demand for district status.

For election candidates and political leaders, the opportunity for a clientelist exchange with rural voters is clear: the announcement of a new administrative unit, which is potentially easier to deliver than new public services, can be made in exchange for electoral support.[606]

Furthermore, villagers in the studied sites observe that when politicians and electoral candidates commit to delivering new districts and sub-counties, these sub-national units are in fact created, as has been widely publicised by elected leaders via

[604] An example of this logical process can be seen in Arua District, where residents demanded the creation of a new district, known as Madi-Okollo, in order to obtain the services they feel they have been denied. Uganda Radio Network, 'Arua Council Approves Creation of Madi Okollo District', 15 February 2011. https://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/arua-council-approves-creation-of-madi-okollo-district

[605] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 11. 15 February 2016.

[606] Stokes, *Political Clientelism*; Kitschelt, 'Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Polities'; Wantchekon, 'Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin'.

radio and print media. In contrast, when politicians commit to improving the quality and quantity of public services, these improvements are often not provided.[607] This outcome is reflected in the household survey, in which villagers in the studied sites argue that elected leaders are unlikely to deliver the improvements in services that they promise to bring. Villagers therefore focus their attention on obtaining a new administrative unit, which they perceive as being a strategy for accessing additional public services. The lack of delivery of public services themselves, compared to the successful delivery of new sub-national units, explains why village-level actors adopt a strategy of attempting to gain new administrative units instead of attempting to gain new services more directly. Based on their observations about the delivery of public services, participants in the household survey do not perceive a high likelihood of improvements to services themselves. Instead, they identify the link between new districts and the perception of new services, and pursue this strategy.

This access strategy is analogous to the concept of a rural livelihood strategy, in that seeking the creation of additional administrative units enables villagers to improve their levels of skill and productivity, and thus diversify and make more sustainable their rural livelihoods options. If the creation of an additional sub-national unit is successful in generating improved supply of public services, households may be able to improve their access to healthcare, sanitation and education services. [608] This has the effect of improving their own human capital, in terms of their health, ability and skill levels, as described by authors such as Chambers and Conway.[609] With higher capabilities and greater human capital, such as higher skill levels and standards of health, citizens are able to undertake more efficient and productive forms of employment. Citizens may also be able to diversify their income sources, such as establishing a home-based business as well as undertaking farming, if they are able to access a marketplace. This greater productivity and greater diversity in income sources can assist citizens in reducing their household's level of poverty, as improved productivity in employment generally results in a higher wage being earned. The access strategy of gaining access to public services can potentially be an effective

[607] As summarised by one respondent to the household survey, "I would be happy if the elected persons fulfilled their promises." (Village 1, Pallisa District)
[608] Scoones, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.
[609] Conway and Chambers, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.

path for citizens to improve their levels of household productivity and income, and undertake positive action to improve their own livelihoods and wellbeing.

Image 7: Village 3, Lira District

Grassroot perspective: Decentralisation as the appearance of development

This research raises the important question of how decentralisation is perceived by those at the grassroot: those who experience service delivery and participatory governance first-hand. The viewpoints of these actors, expressed through the household survey as described in sections 5.5 and 6.6, highlight how decentralisation appears from their perspective. Decentralisation, where it performs well, is a mechanism for bringing development itself to sub-national areas, so that citizens located outside the national capital are also able to realise the benefits of economic growth and change.[610] Accordingly, this research asks: how successful has

[610] Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006'.

decentralisation been in delivering these outcomes, from the perspective of villagers in the six studied sites? What are the visible, or tangible, changes that have been generated by decentralisation in the lives of villagers? To what extent have these theories of decentralisation been realised, in the six studied communities?

Respondents to the household survey describe life in their village as one of poor service delivery, low responsiveness from government, and difficulties in meeting costs for school fees and medical services. As reported one respondent:

> Service delivery is there though not sufficient, people are poor, they have no income sources, and most people in power use money for their personal uses.[611]

Another respondent added:

> The politicians should come down here and address our problems and should fulfil whatever they promise. More schools, roads, hospitals should be constructed. We should be informed, because we have a right to access of information, and our opinions should also be taken into consideration when making decisions about the development priorities of the districts.[612]

Image 7 above illustrates the experience of grassroot-level life in the studied villages. Overall in the studied communities, roads remain ungraded, water sources in poor repair, standards of housing poor, and electricity unavailable. As argued within the existing literature on decentralisation in Uganda,[613] the introduction of decentralised governance has not been effective in expanding the reach and quality of services at the sub-national level.

Furthermore, the results suggest an additional important point. From the perspective of those at the grassroot in the studied sites, the outcomes of decentralisation that would be realised if it were performing well, such as high service standards and responsive governance, are analogous to the process of development

[611] Survey respondent in Village 5 (Ntungamo District).
[612] Survey respondent in Village 1 (Pallisa District).
[613] Balunywa et al., 'An Analysis of Fiscal Decentralization as a Strategy for Improving Revenue Performance in Ugandan Local Governments'.

itself. If decentralisation could be successful in bringing public services and responsive government to the village level, this would appear from the village perspective to be the achievement of development.[614] Where decentralisation is not succeeding in delivering on its policy objectives of improved service delivery and community participation, villagers will not see high-quality public services being provided, particularly at the nearer sub-county level, and will not see public utilities such as electricity being made available. In addition, they will not perceive that their relationship with elected leaders has improved.[615] As a result, communities observe little difference in either: their community's level of development; the standards of governance in their community; or their personal standards of living. That is, it is not only decentralisation that has not succeeded, but their overall level of development will not have changed. In the absence of tangible or visible improvements to development in their community, villagers in the studied sites report that they then resort to seeking 'more' decentralisation: the creation of additional districts, with headquarters yet closer to their homes.

By viewing decentralisation from the perspective of the grassroot, and recognising the goal of decentralisation of bringing tangible and visible development improvements to the village level, it becomes easier to appreciate the lobbying of sub-national communities for the creation of new districts. Where decentralisation has not succeeded in delivering on its core goals of improved service delivery in a specific location, from the perspective of that community, the visible and tangible effects of decentralisation have not been realised. As described in Chapter Five, villagers in the studied communities perceive that the creation of additional sub-national units will generate improvements in service delivery at the village level, where this has failed to be delivered previously. The demand for district creation that arises from the village level, in other words, is generated by the failure of decentralisation to bring the benefits of development itself – such as service delivery and public consultation in planning and budgeting – to the level of the village.

[614] Lambright, *Decentralization in Uganda*.
[615] Francis and James, 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation'.

Overall, when viewed from the perspective of households at the grassroot in the studied sites, district proliferation is reframed as a strategy for communities to attempt to gain access to development itself: to improved standards of living, service delivery, and economic opportunities. In locations where decentralisation has failed to achieve its central objectives, such as improved service delivery and participatory governance, the pursuit of economic goals of community members leads to demand for the intensification of decentralisation (in the form of the creation of additional districts). As a result of these demands, pressure is created for the creation of additional administrative units, in the hope that nearer, smaller districts and sub-counties will bring improved development to the grassroot level. The creation of new districts is an example of the access strategies implemented by residents of sub-national communities, as they seek to expand their economic opportunities. In this sense, district proliferation is the outcome of the interaction between decentralisation and the local economies of sub-national areas.

Section conclusion: District proliferation as survival, access and development

This section has discussed the ways in which the establishment of additional sub-national units in Uganda is driven by the coinciding access and survival strategies of actors, ranging from the grassroot to the national parliament. Following the work of Chambers,[616] this section has argued that the lives and motivations of citizens at the village level are complex and multi-faceted, and underpinned by the careful analysis of individual households' own needs and priorities. The introduction of decentralisation has resulted in the transfer of public funds and other resources to sub-national areas. However, the continued poor performance of decentralised structures in terms of service delivery and public participation in governance has frustrated citizens at the grassroot level, in the studied field sites. Instead, participants in the household survey perceive that the most successful strategy for accessing these resources is to work within the decentralisation system itself, and seek its expansion in the form of additional districts. This strategy is based on a perception held by households in the studied sites that the creation of new districts is then followed by services being

[616] Robert Chambers, 'Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts? , Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts?', *Environment and Urbanization* 7, no. 1 (1 April 1995): 173–204, https://doi.org/10.1177/095624789500700106.

'brought nearer' to the community: new services are created, closer to the village. While this perception may not be realised in practice as the creation of additional districts has created burdens for the public financial management system,[617] participants in the household survey have drawn this link between new districts and improved development outcomes. Furthermore, villagers in the six studied sites report that they do not perceive that politicians are likely to deliver improved public services directly, even when they make this commitment in the lead-up to elections. Instead, villagers observe that the creation of new sub-national units is in fact delivered when it is promised, as can be readily seen from the widespread national media reporting of the announcement of new districts in response to citizens' demands. The act of citizens' lobbying for additional districts (rather than for public services themselves) is evidence of a perception on the part of citizens that their development needs can be addressed through the creation of new districts. Villagers look to the creation of additional districts as a mechanism for expanding their access strategies for resources, and improving their rural livelihood strategies, in ways that they perceive may mean that development is brought 'nearer' to their village.

[617] However, Green (Green, 'District Creation and Decentralisation in Uganda'.) argues that in fact, newer districts perform *less* well than more established districts at financing service delivery and meeting the minimum service standards for public services. That is, while villagers may *perceive* that gaining a new district will lead to improvements in public service delivery, in fact there is *less* chance that service delivery will improve under a newer district, at least in the short term.

7.4 District proliferation at the district and sub-county: Club goods and livelihoods

This section details the advantages that can be captured by elite actors at the sub-county and district levels, following the creation of an additional sub-county or district. The formation of a new administrative unit is described in terms of the creation of a club good: elite actors are able to become 'insiders' to the membership of the club good, and so derive benefits from it. The creation of additional hierarchies within the public service and council structures thus offers a diversified livelihood for actors who would otherwise not have an alternative to agricultural employment. Non-elite actors, who lack the education background or status to be able to benefit from new employment opportunities arising from new districts and sub-counties, are at risk of being excluded from the club good.

Livelihoods and survival at the sub-county and district levels: On the rural margin

From the perspective of community members at the sub-county level, the creation of additional administrative units (in particular, a new sub-county) has different effects for different citizens, and as a result, can potentially contribute to social exclusion. The level of the sub-county occupies a marginal space in the Ugandan political economy: the sub-county headquarters is neither entirely rural nor entirely urban, with a cluster of office buildings for the sub-county government and council, and a small marketplace. The sub-county functions as a 'corridor' between rural and urban areas. Some houses may be clustered nearby. Otherwise, these remain essentially rural areas, and staff of sub-county government structures are likely to live primarily in agricultural contexts, travelling a short distance to the sub-county headquarters each day.

In this sense, residents and staff of a sub-county headquarters are able to combine several livelihoods and access strategies; a single individual may be both employed in the sub-county council and maintain a plot for farming. These diverse income sources represent a more sustainable livelihood than for households whose

income derives from a narrower range of sources.[618] Depending on the social and economic status of individuals at the sub-county, officials at this level may or may not constitute an elite.

This section discusses the benefits of sub-county proliferation for elite actors at the sub-county level, followed by non-elite actors at this level. It is argued that residents of the sub-county who have higher education levels and political-economic status are able to leverage the benefits that can be realised following the creation of the 'club good' of an additional sub-county. However, this may worsen social exclusion and inequality, as non-elite members of the community are not able to derive the equivalent benefit. Furthermore, the creation of additional districts has been seen to direct resources away from service delivery in favour of the payment of salaries and allowances for new employees, as discussed in Chapter Four. This means that non-elite members of the community are potentially being made worse-off from the loss of funding for public services that may arise following the creation of new districts. This uneven distribution of the benefits that are potentially generated by the creation of a new district can possibly contribute to social exclusion and economic marginalisation of non-elite actors at the sub-national level.

Elite actors at the sub-county level: Employment opportunities

For sub-county elites, who may have had more access to education than most citizens of the sub-county, there are clear advantages to the creation of a new sub-county in the form of opportunities to gain employment at this level. Sub-counties employ both LC3 officials in elected roles, and public servants in employed roles.[619] These patronage opportunities bring one of the few chances to gain formal employment in a rural area,[620] with the possibility of drawing a regular and dependable income (particularly for public servants), and a pension in retirement.[621] These roles at the sub-county level can be doubly beneficial, as sub-counties' administrative centres are generally located in rural areas. This means that an employee of the sub-

[618] Conway and Chambers, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.
[619] Hicken, 'Clientelism'.
[620] Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism*.
[621] Grossman and Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation'. 203.

county can remain living in their village, allowing them to diversify their income sources by combining agricultural production with formal employment.[622] These roles also bring the opportunity to access vehicles and fuel, which offer not just visible markers of status, but assets that can be used to benefit the worker in other ways. For example, an LC3 chairperson may be able to use their official vehicle to transport their home-grown agricultural products to a market at a nearby district, thus allowing them to draw higher income from their agricultural produce as well as their employment. For elite actors at the sub-county level, therefore, the creation of a new sub-county introduces a club good, through which members can derive benefits and capture access to resources.

Non-elite actors at the sub-county level: Services and market access

For non-elite actors at the sub-county level, who have less education or experience in formal employment, the creation of a new sub-county brings a new trading centre, and a new market in which to conduct economic activity. Following the establishment of a new sub-county headquarters with a marketplace, citizens who live in rural areas, and whose income largely derives from agriculture, can travel to a marketplace more easily and cheaply than if this centre were more remote from their village. Rural agricultural workers then face lower transaction costs in selling their agricultural surplus, such as reducing the costs of hiring a 'middle man' to transport their output to the marketplace. As is the case for elite actors, the creation of a new sub-county represents the opportunity to diversify their income sources, and so improve the sustainability of their livelihoods strategy on the rural margin.[623] They may also be better able to access public services that are to be provided at this level, such as a primary school or HC3. For these citizens, pursuing their access strategy of gaining access to public services via demanding the creation of additional sub-counties is likely to be beneficial, as it reduces the distance they will need to travel in order to access public services. These improved outcomes provide an incentive for these residents to demand the creation of an addition sub-county, with headquarters nearby to their village.

[622] Scoones, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.
[623] Scoones.

However, because non-elite actors are less likely to be able to capture benefits of formal employment that requires a specific education level, they may not be able to move into the 'club good' created by a new sub-national unit. This disparity introduces a risk of increased inequality between elite and non-elite actors at the sub-county level, with worsened social and economic inclusion. While both elite and non-elite actors are likely to be made better-off when a new sub-county is created in their area, elite actors are likely to benefit to a greater degree than will non-elite actors. This is reflected in the results of the household survey: when asked who benefits the most from the creation of a new district, respondents most commonly indicated 'Politicians' (51 per cent of respondents) and 'Powerful people in the district' (16 per cent of respondents).

District-level incentives: District proliferation in pursuit of an urban livelihoods strategy

At the district level, the creation of additional districts generates changes to livelihoods and access, but in a different manner from those changes at the levels of the village and sub-county. District capitals, while situated within a rural area, have features such as formal markets and shopping areas, secondary schools, transport connections to other district headquarters, and the district government headquarters and council chambers. District capitals therefore contain a range of livelihood options: some residents live entirely within the capital, with a broadly urban livelihood; some residents live in a nearby rural village, and travel to the capital for commercial reasons or to access services; a third group of residents live in rural areas and rarely or never travel to the capital.[624] The creation of an additional district, with a new district capital, thus creates important dynamics at the level of the district, and affects different residents in diverse ways.

Elite actors – those whose education level or economic status enables them to gain formal employment, and who are more likely to reside within or nearby the capital – can derive benefits from the creation of an additional district. This can take place in two ways. For elites actors who are not currently employed or elected within a district structure, but would have the capacity to obtain such a role, the creation of a new

[624] Scoones.

district presents the opportunity for access to formal employment. For those who currently hold a district-level elected position, there is less competition for re-election.[625] In this way, the creation of additional hierarchies generates a rationale for the creation of additional formal elected and bureaucratic roles. This section presents the benefits of the creation of an additional district for different actors at the district level, with reference to club goods, hierarchisation of public administration, and the opportunity for actors to implement a diversified urban livelihood.

District-level elites seeking formal employment: Hierarchies and urban livelihoods

Elite actors at the district level are able to derive benefits from the creation of an additional district through a range of channels, including by gaining employment directly from the district, or by becoming a subcontractor or other affiliated employment. For those residents of a district who are relatively elite (in terms of their education level or potential to obtain a role in formal employment), the creation of a new district represents a number of opportunities to progress their livelihood strategies and opportunities. District elites who have not yet been employed at the district level may be able to gain employment as a public servant following the creation of an additional district, due to the increased demand for staff that follows the creation of a new district. These roles carry both secure tenure and high status, and represent a sustainable and stable source of urban livelihoods.[626] This employment allows district elites to gain access to regular salaries and to assets such as offices, computers and phones, from which additional personal businesses can be run. A District Senior Finance Officer describes[627] this process:

> But for all issues, we look at employment. If there were alternative employment, we could say they could stop [creating new districts], but if there are no other employments, they continue creating, and they get our people jobs. Even our education structure, it does not... We have not... It has not enabled us to get skills, eh? Then we all must work in offices, so everyone looks for districts [as a source of

[625] Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006'.
[626] Scoones, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.
[627] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 3. 3 February 2016.

employment]. So we voted on the condition that they were going to bring us a district. They give our kids jobs. Eh? [Laughs.]

The creation of additional levels of hierarchies in the Ugandan public administration, as enacted by the creation of new districts and sub-counties, creates a reason or justification for the employment of additional officers. By seeking the creation of additional districts and sub-counties, elites at this level are able to create a sufficient justification for their own employment. In addition, sub-national elite actors are able to use this hierarchisation of sub-national structures in order to become part of a distinct club that is visible to the national government, and so leverage this club as the basis for claiming resources from the state. National government elites are themselves better able to implement their own patronage strategies, by creating new districts as a basis for offering employment opportunities to their clients at the sub-national level.[628]

Notably, the employment of additional elected leaders and public servants following the creation of a new sub-national unit will have the effect of drawing resources away from expenditure on services, as discussed in Chapter Four. That is, while elite actors are able to derive a benefit in terms of additional employment opportunities or contracts, non-elite actors are made worse-off from district proliferation because of reduced expenditure on public services. The poor-standard services that are available to sub-national areas, as described in Chapter Four, may be further worsened by the creation of additional districts, even though this generates employment and patronage opportunities for others.

In this sense, the urban livelihoods of district elites can be expanded into new forms of employment, with greater dependability and stability than running businesses in the private sector alone. That is, elite actors are able to derive benefits from the creation of a new district via becoming a member of the club good that a new district represents. Indeed, the elites of districts are arguably the group of citizens who obtain the clearest benefit from district proliferation, and are most central to the interaction

[628] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'; Medina and Stokes, 'Clientelism as Political Monopoly'.

between the district-level political-economy context and the implementation of decentralisation. A professor at Makerere University explains:[629]

> So when you look deep in the villages, it is basically the leaders – the community leaders – who are the kind of elite, who can talk about some – they are the elites in a rural setting, who are cognisant to the opportunities of decentralisation. Either they have participated as councillors, or they are the relatives of local leaders, or they are associated with, they have knowledge of, the works of local authorities, they are part of the contracts that are delivered to local firms. Now that is the category of people who has largely benefited from decentralisation.

For these elites, the strong incentive to see an additional district created may mean that the leverage their political-economy connections especially strongly, such as through lobbying their local MP for their advocacy towards this.[630]

In addition to elites who are able to be employed directly in the district administration and council, others are able to gain other livelihood opportunities from the creation of a new district. District elites who are able to gain a benefit from employment opportunities from the creation of an additional district, such as construction services for a new district headquarters, are also able to benefit from the creation of a new district. They may have skills in engineering, construction, or another relevant skill for the establishment of a new town centre; that is, they too are able to gain access to the 'club good' of a newly-created district. Once the new district centre is established, they can benefit from contracts for the creation of additional services, such as schools and healthcare centres, as well as water and sanitation and roads services. A Professor at Makerere University describes[631] this situation:

> They are not directly with the government, but they are associated with people who are councillors or people who win contracts from the local authorities – those companies or organisations – and they

[629] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 76. 20 May 2016.
[630] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[631] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 76. 20 May 2016.

> do works. So in other words, those are the people who can feel [the effects of decentralisation].

These elites will not become employees of the district in a formal sense, but will benefit from a new district by gaining continual employment opportunities from it.[632] These contractors are thus able to improve their urban livelihood strategies: their employment and residence in a relatively urban area can be sustained by the creation of an additional district.

District-level elites seeking to maintain an elected role

For some elected leaders, the benefit to be derived from the creation of a new district is reduced competition for re-election to their role in an LC5 council. Where a member of the district elite is concerned that they may not be re-elected to their role in the next election, this presents an incentive to seek the creation of an additional district. Gaining re-election as an LC5 councillor ensures continued access to allowances and other privileges, as well as being maintained in a powerful social position. When a new district is created, existing elites are able to retain their current roles more easily, while competitor elites can then be elected to the council of the newly-created district. This situation was described by an interview participant at the district level in one of the three studied districts:[633]

> I think there are too many districts. They have been motivated by political interests. ... And the reasoning they normally give is that, districts, to move services nearer to the people. But in my experience I have seen they are always created by the giant politicians – if, if myself and him [gestures to colleague], we are the giants of [their district], and I have fears about him, maybe he has more support than me, so in the game I can try to study and see, on which side does he have more support? And where do I have more? If a particular region is for me, then we propose and say let's just

[632] Stokes, *Political Clientelism*.
[633] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 8. 04 February 2016.

> split it – cut my side and then cut that fellow with his much support that side, his side, so that we both survive.

Rural residents on the urban margin: non-elite, but advantaged

Districts are also resident to non-elite actors, who may lack the education, social status or inclination to become a member of the leadership of the district, and instead derive their income primarily from agriculture. For some of these non-elite households, their residence may be near enough to the district capital that they are able to access it easily, meaning that they are within the urban margin. For these actors, too, the creation of a new district nearby to their village can present a range of advantages. For such residents, who are broadly non-elite in the sense of not being able to gain formal employment at the district, there are nonetheless access and livelihood benefits that can be accessed from the creation of a new district. If residents on the rural-urban margin are able to travel to a district capital, the services and opportunities they are able to access will improve compared to residents in very-remote village settings. Citizens who live near to a district centre, though still themselves rural agricultural workers, will face fewer barriers to accessing town-based services (such as the HC5) and economic facilities (such as markets and trading centres). This is the core of the argument that splitting districts into smaller areas brings services 'nearer to the people', as articulated[634] here by a District Health Officer:

> So the positive aspect is that those challenges [splitting the district into smaller districts] have been reduced to a more manageable size. And that has taken services much, much nearer to the people.

[634] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 18. 11 February 2016.

In this sense, residents of the urban margin are able to expand their range of income sources, and access economic opportunities[635] that would not have been available if their village had remained remote from its nearest (former) district capital.[636]

This means that the creation of a new district – and so the establishment of a new district capital – will draw a cohort of rural citizens into this relatively proximate position.[637] These citizens will still interact with government via their village's LC1 council, but can nonetheless travel to access services and facilities at the district level more easily. For them, the creation of an additional district represents both an access strategy (for services) and a livelihoods strategy (for access to marketplaces), giving them substantial incentives to support the creation of an additional district with its headquarters nearby to their village. In this sense, residents of the urban margin are able to gain the benefits of a club good, accruing to members of a newly-created district.

Rural, non-elites at the district level, and the risk of social exclusion

While the creation of a new district provides opportunities for district-level elites and for residents of the urban margin, other residents of districts may not derive an economic benefit from the creation of a new district. For residents of rural areas that are relatively remote from even a newer, nearer district capital, the creation of an additional district may have little impact on daily life. For these citizens, who are unlikely to travel to the district capital frequently or at all, the creation of new employment opportunities at the district level are not likely to have a substantial impact on their rural livelihoods strategies. The creation of additional hierarchies of government, likewise, is not likely to be meaningful; any communication with

[635] Note that this is in contrast to the predictions of the Lewis Model, which predicts that rural agricultural workers will be drawn into (and become a resident of) urban areas in order to gain employment in newly-formed industrial sectors. Most district capitals, particularly of new districts, do not yet host substantial industrial employment. Employment in district capitals is either in the government or council, or in services sectors (retail and hospitality). These employers do not create substantial demand for new employees from rural areas, who are likely to be relatively under-skilled, so the assumptions of the Lewis Model are unlikely to hold in this case. Instead, farm workers may travel to the district capital on a daily basis, to take advantage of economic opportunities – but remain primarily resident in rural areas, and primarily work in agriculture.
[636] Conway and Chambers, 'Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'.
[637] Crook, 'Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local–Central Relations'.

government representatives is likely to be limited to the LC1 Council. This is reflected in the results of the household survey, in which respondents reported that they prefer to consult the LC1 Chair (62 per cent of respondents) and/or a local clan or tribal leader (51 per cent of respondents) when issues arise. Only 15 per cent of respondents reported communicating with officials from the LC2-5 levels. In this sense, residents of rural areas who work in subsistence farming, and are not sufficiently educated or well-connected to be considered part of the elite, are likely to be excluded from the 'club good' of a newly-created district. These residents remain largely invisible within the institutions and architecture of the state hierarchy.

District proliferation therefore risks worsening the social and economic space between elite and non-elite actors; between members of the club good of a new district, and outsiders to it. Those citizens who are not able to leverage the decentralisation system to gain greater economic and political opportunities and networks may be subject to social and economic exclusion. Furthermore, they could potentially be made worse-off, if the creation of an additional district results in resources being redirected from funding public services to paying the wage bill of the employees of a newly-established district.

Links between district elites and national elites

The creation of a new district will require the election of an additional LC5 council. The creation of an additional district therefore creates the opportunity for a new group of elected elites to be formed, whereby they can lay claim to the status, allowances and office space that accrue to the holders of public office at the district level. District elites in elected roles hold strong influence over the policies that are formed by district governments, and so can be highly influential in ensuring that NRM's core policies are indeed implemented at the sub-national level.[638] The interaction between the political economy and decentralisation that occurs at the district level results in district elites who aspire to holding office at the LC5 level agitating for the creation of additional districts in their local area, via drawing on their connections and

[638] Wilkins, 'Who Pays for Pakalast? The NRM's Peripheral Patronage in Rural Uganda:'

networks at the national level.[639] There is an additional advantage for district-level elites in being visibly aligned to NRM, so that they are able to access the support of senior, national political leaders, as well as financial support for their election campaigns.[640] Working with national MPs from local electorates, aspiring LC5 members lobby the national government for the creation of an additional district.[641] For MPs, the promise of a new district attracts votes; for district elites, the promise of a new district represents an urban livelihoods strategy for their benefit.

Section conclusion: Drivers of district proliferation at district and sub-county levels

This section has described the incentives and rationales that drive actors at the sub-county and district levels to seek the creation of additional districts. For both elite and non-elite actors at these levels, the creation of new administrative units generates opportunities to enhance and diversify their livelihood strategies, and to gain access to public services. By becoming a new administrative unit, a community becomes visible to the infrastructure and institutions of the state, creating a 'club good' from which its members can capture benefits. For non-elite actors in rural areas, however, the creation of additional districts or sub-counties is likely to have little impact, unless travel to the headquarters of these units becomes easier. In the absence of contact with the newly-created unit, rural households remain marginalised. Furthermore, if the creation of an additional district results in financial resources being redirected from service delivery to the payment of wages for new employees of the district, non-elite actors may be made worse-off. The capture of benefits from some community members, but the ongoing exclusion of others, represents a risk of worsening social inequality. Overall, the creation of new districts and sub-counties is likely to continue, as it represents the point of intersection between the interests of a wide range of actors. Actors at these levels have noted the opportunity to maximise their own political and economic interests through the continuing pursuit of district proliferation.

[639] Vokes and Wilkins, 'Party, Patronage and Coercion in NRM's 2016 Re Election in Uganda: Imposed or Embedded?'
[640] '"Vote for NRM Flag Bearer" – President Urges Sheema District Youths | Uganda Media Centre'.
[641] For example, LC5 councillors from Pallisa recommend that two counties from Pallisa be separated from the district and elevated to two new districts.
https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1180750/pallisa-districts

7.5 District proliferation and the centre: Political survival, security and wealth creation

The proliferation of districts since 1986 is testament to the mutual recognition amongst multiple actors in the Ugandan context of the benefits that can be generated and captured by the continual expansion of the decentralisation system. For actors at the central-government level, this includes the creation and capture of patronage networks, and of citizens' votes.[642] In addition, as will be discussed in this section, the creation of additional districts has become an extension of broader Ugandan Government political objectives, and the continuous drive to remain in office. District proliferation supports NRM's objectives of transferring wealth to the sub-national level, and of maintaining peace and security. District proliferation thus supports a range of NRM's objectives, beyond the creation of sub-national patronage networks.

Central-government elites: District proliferation for gaining patrons and votes

For elected leaders at the national level, the creation of additional districts is a political survival strategy: by responding to demands from citizens and elites for new districts, the national government can help to guarantee its own continued popularity.[643] In the lead-up to elections, national politicians make a range of commitments to their constituents relating to the provision of public services, and the commitment to "bring" a new district or sub-county to the local area remains an important element of these claims.[644] Constituents perceive that there is a causal relationship between obtaining a new administrative unit locally and the provision of public services, and so direct their votes to candidates who make this commitment.[645] District creation is also presented to voters as a strategy for creating employment

[642] Golooba-Mutebi, 'Devolution and Outsourcing of Municipal Services in Kampala City, Uganda'.
[643] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[644] In a vivid example, an MP representing Tororo County made an emotional appeal for the creation of a new district on the floor of Parliament in 2015. Uganda Radio Network. 'MP Ekanya 'Attempts Suicide' on House floor over a district.' The Observer. 19 August, 2015. https://www.observer.ug/news-headlines/39368-mp-ekanya-attempts-suicide-on-house-floor-over-a-district
[645] Or explicitly draw links between the creation of a new district and their electoral behaviour. See for example: Anon. 'No District, No Support for NRM in these Elections, Residents Vow'. Uganda Election 2016, 23 August 2011. http://www.elections.co.ug/new-vision/election/1000358/district-support-nrm-elections-residents-vow

opportunities,[646] with politicians implying that 'sons and daughters of the soil'[647] will be able to gain access to these opportunities, if that politician is elected. In the context of relatively few opportunities to obtain non-farming employment in rural areas, these promises of formal employment can represent a rare opportunity for a young person in a rural area to look to a future other than in subsistence farming. A commitment to create a new administrative unit in a rural area creates multiple political advantages for national-level elites, and creates a perception of being able to deliver resources to the 'grassroot'.[648] The successful delivery of public services is not currently being observed, as these services tend to be of poor quality; the commitment to deliver a new district is both more plausible to voters and more likely to be delivered.

The creation of additional districts and sub-counties allows elite actors at the national level to create and control patronage networks of their supporters at the district level. Where there are geographical areas that have demonstrated strong support for the ruling party, national elites can establish a favourable relationship with local elites by granting their request for an additional administrative unit.[649] Local elites will therefore by bound by a degree of gratitude to these national elite actors, in the sense of potentially being expected to repay this action with their political loyalty.[650] Furthermore, given that the creation of an additional district necessitates the creation of an additional seat in Parliament for a local Woman MP, the creation of a new district represents an opportunity for NRM to expand its political influence by capturing both the main seat and the Woman MP seat, as described in section 6.5. The political strength of the party is thus further ensured by the creation of a new district specifically, rather than simply new sub-counties, with a new district's resulting new parliamentary seat. Conversely, where there are areas of support for opposition candidates, the decision to create an additional district can be withheld, to deny resources and status to district-level elites who have not demonstrated sufficient support for NRM.[651]

[646] Perrot, Makara, and Lafargue, *Elections in a Hybrid Regime*.
[647] Ayeko-Kümmeth, 'Districts Creation and Its Impact on Local Government in Uganda'.
[648] Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 'Investigating the Links between Political Settlements and Inclusive Development in Uganda'.
[649] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'.
[650] Rubongoya, *Regime Hegemony in Museveni's Uganda*.
[651] Riedl and Dickovick, 'Party Systems and Decentralization in Africa'.

The decision to create an additional administrative unit therefore rests on calculations of political survival, patronage and clientelism, and on strategies of how to best generate sub-national support for the ruling party. Overall at the national level, the decentralisation system has been re-directed towards ensuring the continued popularity of the government, through granting new districts and sub-counties to areas that demonstrate strong support of the national government.

District proliferation and political objectives: Wealth creation and internal security

The creation of additional districts as an intensification of decentralisation can be implemented in order to pursue a variety of purposes. As the preceding section describes, new districts can be created in response to demands from grassroot actors for greater economic inclusion and improved standards of living. In this way, the interaction between the economic goals of citizens and decentralisation policy generates demand for the creation of additional districts. In addition to interacting with economic factors, decentralisation interacts with the political objectives of elected leaders, including the contemporary objectives of the ruling party. In the process of campaigning for re-election in 2016, NRM identified a platform of election commitments with a focus on security, stability, peace and inclusive economic growth. These goals are described in the NRM Manifesto 2016-2021.[652]

Many areas of government policy are framed in terms of their contributions to these overarching goals. For example, below these headline goals of stability and inclusive economic growth, the NRM Manifesto[653] then frames education policy in terms of skills development for young people, enabling them to participate in economic growth. However, because decentralisation policy is more wide-ranging, its contribution to overall government policies is more complex. Decentralisation can be adjusted in order to better realise the overarching goals of the ruling party, both in the terminology used to describe the policy, and in the way it is implemented. This section will argue that decentralisation is implemented in a manner that supports the realisation of the political goals of NRM, particularly in regard to its two central pillars

[652] National Resistance Movement, 'NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress: Taking Uganda to Modernity Through Job-Creation and Inclusive Development'.
[653] National Resistance Movement, 'NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress'.

for the 2016-2021 parliamentary term: wealth creation and security. It will be further argued that the rapid creation of additional districts intensifies NRM's use of decentralisation to support these goals. District proliferation can, in this way, be understood as the outcome of decentralisation's interaction with political factors within the Ugandan context.

District proliferation in support of wealth creation

The emphasis on wealth creation in the most recent election campaign results from a growing awareness that high economic growth rates over the past decade[654] have not generated substantial improvements in quality of life for a large proportion of Ugandan society. For residents of rural areas, whose primary economic activity remains subsistence farming, economic growth has had little tangible impact. NRM has utilised the phrases 'wealth creation' and 'local economic development' to suggest that inclusive economic growth will be implemented in rural areas. One major policy shift relating to inclusive economic development came in 2013, when Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) was announced by President Museveni. OWC supplements the NAADS program, and comprises the subsidised distribution of farming inputs to rural areas, delivered using labour and logistics of the UPDF. OWC has had a high profile, due to its inception as an initiative of the President, but has been criticised for not including the agricultural advice and extension activities that had been central to the NAADS program. Instead, OWC distributes farming inputs, such as seeds and fertilisers, without complementary support and advice. It is also argued that OWC tends to provide too few resources for the number of households in need, meaning that sub-national governments and councils face choosing who amongst their communities will receive these benefits. The inception phase of OWC was overseen by the brother of President Museveni, General Caleb Akandwanaho (also known as Salim Saleh).[655]

During the 2016 election campaign period, wealth creation and inclusive economic development became core elements of NRM's campaign, with the NRM

[654] According to World Bank data, Uganda's annual GDP growth rate has averaged 6.3 per cent since 1986, with a peak of 11.5 per cent in 1995. Source: https://data.worldbank.org. Analysis author's own.
[655] Marquette and Peiffer, 'Corruption and Collective Action'.

Manifesto describing wealth creation in terms of improving household wealth, improving food security and achieving agricultural transformation.[656] These goals are placed at the forefront of the Party's objectives for this time period. Modernisation of agriculture is described as being crucial to the dual goals of improving household incomes, and acceleration economic activity.

However, while wealth creation remains a key goal for the national government, the role of district and sub-county governments in the wealth-creation narrative is less clear. Unlike under the popular NAADS program, which had a clear role for district- and sub-county level agricultural extension workers to provide advice and training to local farmers, sub-national governments do not have a formal role in OWC.[657] The annual workplans[658] of the three studied districts indicate that none of the planned agricultural extension activities for the financial year 2015/16 were able to be completed, due to a lack of either funding delivered through the conditional grants, staffing, or vehicles to travel to remote farm sites. On the other hand, interview participants at the district level reported that they have been instructed to "consider" local economic development while developing their annual workplans. A District CAO explains[659] this as follows:

> About 70 per cent of these funds that we will have discretion on, will be used for livelihoods and production. Though that also is conditional but it is positive – because over time we have spent a lot of the money provided on infrastructure – but with this change we will be spending money on putting food on the table.

This view indicates that the connection of sub-national governments to wealth-creation activities is simultaneously mainstreamed and marginalised: sub-national governments are expected to include wealth-creation activities in their annual workplans, but additional funding is not provided for this purpose. Rather than

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[656] *NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress: Taking Uganda to Modernity*. Page 93.
[657] Prisca Baike, 'Farmers up North Declare Operation Wealth Creation a Failure', The Observer - Uganda, accessed 5 August 2018, https://observer.ug/o-biz/56101-farmers-up-north-declare-operation-wealth-creation-a-failure.html.
[658] Analysis author's own, based on documents obtained from http://budget.go.ug/budget/individual-lg-budgets-and-performance-reports, relating to the three studied districts (Pallisa, Lira and Ntungamo).
[659] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 16. 10 February 2016.

including district and sub-county governments in the delivery of its flagship wealth-creation program, the OWC, NRM has instead included decentralised governance structures in another way to achieve its wealth-creation goals. That is, the creation of additional districts allows the central government to be seen to generate wealth in specific locations.

Creating a new district or sub-county serves several purposes in relation to generating wealth and economic activity at the sub-national level. Importantly, it creates employment directly, by generating employment demand for sub-national officials and supporting staff. According to the NRM Manifesto 2016-2021,[660] in a section describing the achievements of the previous parliamentary term, decentralisation has been a successful mechanism for job creation:

> The NRM's direct investments in infrastructure development, agricultural improvement and in the programmes for strengthening decentralisation and institutions at the centre continues to create jobs both in the formal and informal sectors.

These permanent, ongoing, salaried employment opportunities can be important in locations in which subsistence farming is the main economic activity.[661] The establishment of a new district or sub-county capital also generates economic activity more broadly, such as contracting opportunities to support the new government, and the creation of local marketplaces.

In creating an additional sub-national unit, therefore, the government is able to generate targeted employment and economic activity in areas of its choosing, as a form of political patronage.[662] These choices may be based on a desire to reward existing patronage networks, or to create additional networks.[663] More broadly, however, new sub-national units may be created in locations where it would be politically beneficial to demonstrate this support for the local economy, such as areas that are economically marginalised or politically disengaged from NRM. By using

[660] NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress: Taking Uganda to Modernity through Job-Creation and Inclusive Development. https://www.nrm.ug/sites/default/files/manifestoes/NRM%20Manifesto%202016.pdf. Page 229.
[661] Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda'. Page 93.
[662] Stokes, *Political Clientelism*.
[663] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.

district proliferation as a strategy for gaining political advantage in the name of wealth creation, NRM is able to leverage decentralisation in pursuit of its political goals.

District proliferation in pursuit of security and stability

In addition to wealth creation, a second election commitment and subsequent policy goal nominated by NRM is the maintenance of security. After decades of civil conflict between the 1960s and 1980s, a central priority of many Ugandan voters is maintaining peace. According to narratives generated by the NRM itself, voters report that they view Museveni personally to have delivered and maintained peace in Uganda.[664] As a result, NRM has implemented a range of policies aiming to maintain security, such as an expansion in the scale of the Uganda Police Force (UPF), UPDF and various associated organisations, such as paramilitary police. The NRM Manifesto 2016-2021 specifies a target of a 1:500 ratio of police officers to the overall population, the development of training academies for the police and military, and the establishment of national service for young people. A specific link is also drawn between wealth creation and stability, in explaining the involvement of the UPDF in Operation Wealth Creation.[665]

In addition to these measures to improve the size and capacity of military and policing agencies of government, decentralisation has also been utilised in support of maintaining security. In particular, the creation of additional districts has been implemented in locations where the addition of a new district has a spillover benefit for peace and stability. Additional districts can be created where conflict over resources has developed between rival tribal groups who live within one district.[666] By dividing districts and allocating each tribe its own administrative unit, each tribal group gains control over a line of funding, and competition over scarce resources can be reduced. For example, in eastern Uganda, tensions between Iteso and Jopadhola communities, who are both resident in Tororo District, have led to calls for a new district to be

[664] 'Ugandans Love NRM because of Security, Says Museveni'. Daily Monitor, 18 June 2018. http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Ugandans-love-NRM-because-security-Museveni/688334-4618320-jc2un8z/index.html
[665] National Resistance Movement, 'NRM Manifesto 2016-2021: Steady Progress: Taking Uganda to Modernity Through Job-Creation and Inclusive Development'. Pp.37-38.
[666] Boone, *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*.

created.[667] According to Iteso leaders, the Jopadhola (who are the majority tribe in the current district) do not adequately represent the interests of the Iteso community. The Iteso are mostly resident in one county of the district, leading to calls for that county to be separated from Tororo District and elevated to the status of a district of its own.[668]

The creation of an additional district generates another advantage for the central government's ability to deliver peacefulness in Uganda, in that it extends the reach of employees who undertake monitoring and surveillance of the population. The creation of additional districts necessitates the creation of district-level employment roles whose purpose is to promote community stability, and to report to the central government any threat to this stability. As explained by a District Planner,[669] each district's government includes a Resident District Commissioner, a District Internal Security Officer (DISO), and a Uganda Police post and stationed officers. The creation of a new district, particularly in regions that tend to resist central government rule, therefore allows the central government to increase its monitoring and surveillance over the population in these areas, through these roles. By bringing a new district headquarters nearer to the people, the central government is likewise able to keep a nearer eye on the people. For areas of Uganda in which support for political opposition parties is strong, the creation of additional districts may bring an unwelcome additional presence nearer to their populations. By using the decentralisation system to create additional administrative units, the central government is able to exercise increased oversight of the population, including of areas where opposition support is stronger. The interaction of political factors with decentralisation policy to create a proliferation of districts has therefore contributed to the maintenance of NRM's authority.

Through creating one or more additional districts in areas experiencing tensions amongst tribal groups, NRM is able to leverage decentralisation as a mechanism for achieving its goals relating to security and stability. The proliferation of additional districts is partly driven by NRM's focus on achieving these security goals, and in effect

[667] Pius Opae Papa, 'Tororo Rat Eater Angry at Museveni'. *The Observer*, 9 January 2014. https://www.observer.ug/component/content/article?id=29544:tororo-rat-eater-angry-at-museveni
[668] Anon. 'Tracing Border Conflict between Jopadhola, Iteso in Tororo'. *Daily Monitor*, 29 May 2017. http://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/PeoplePower/Tracing-border-conflict-between-Jopadhola-Iteso-Tororo/689844-3944308-w9n3d6/index.html
[669] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 5. 3 February 2016.

indicates that NRM has prioritised maintaining security over the public-finance challenges that are generated by creating additional districts. As well as increasing the level of funding and staffing available to the security sector, decentralisation can be implemented in ways that support the political objectives of the ruling party. District proliferation is framed in this policy context as being the outcome of the interaction between NRM's political goals and objectives, and decentralisation policy.

Section conclusion: District proliferation as the enactment of current political objectives

In the current parliamentary term, the primary goals of NRM are twofold: to maintain security, and to enact wealth-creation and inclusive economic development. Decentralisation has been enlisted in the policy arsenal available to NRM in pursuit of these two goals, in the form of district proliferation. Firstly, regarding wealth creation, new districts and sub-counties have been created in order to facilitate the transfer of resources to specific locations. This wealth creation takes place through generating wealth through employment in the sub-national public service, or through economic and market activity at the new headquarters. This model represents an extension beyond the idea of district creation as a way of generating patronage networks amongst elites: instead, district creation brings benefits to a wider range of community members than the political elite, and allows NRM to claim success in its goals of generating inclusive growth.

Secondly, regarding security and stability, new districts are created in locations of conflict between tribal groups, where these groups are competing for access to the resources of the state. By using decentralisation as a mechanism for transferring resources to marginalised tribes, or to tribes that perceive themselves as marginalised, NRM is able to placate frustrated tribal leaders and reduce tensions. As a result, NRM is able to claim success in its goal of maintaining security and stability within the community.

In each of these policy areas, NRM has elected to accept the disadvantages of district proliferation, such as financial and staffing pressures in new districts, in order to gain political advantage; it has traded off easy management of public financial

management for gains in its stated policy goals. NRM has utilised decentralisation policy to generate political capital, in the hope of achieving progress towards its Manifesto goals. In this sense, the rapid creation of additional districts results from the interaction between decentralisation and the political objectives of NRM.

7.6 District proliferation and group identity

As described in the sections 7.4 and 7.5, the creation of additional districts has become a mechanism for households and elites at the sub-county, district and national levels to improve their options for survival, in both a political and livelihoods framing. The interaction between decentralisation and the political-economy context in Uganda has created opportunities for actors to engage with the decentralisation process in ways that generate the greatest benefit for themselves. These coinciding incentives intersect at the point of district creation: the addition of new districts that allow the greatest number of actors to capture the resources of the decentralisation process for themselves. This section addresses the ways in which actors in the Ugandan political-economy context utilise the existence of tribal differences as a platform for capturing the benefits of decentralisation. By mobilising along lines of tribal difference, and utilising difference as a vector for demanding the creation of a new district, actors are able to generate benefits for themselves from the decentralisation system. This section explores the mechanisms by which this process occurs, and contemplates the longer-term effects for the political-economy context of this phenomenon.

New districts as an opportunity for self-identification and power

The results from fieldwork undertaken for this thesis, as presented in Chapters Four and Five, raise an important issue relating to the proliferation of districts. In order to realise the ambition of gaining a new district in their region, and to access the resources and opportunities a new district brings, communities are seeking markers by which they can self-identify as a group.[670] Once a community identifies a way in which they can label and differentiate themselves from their neighbouring communities, they are able to use this label as the basis for gaining an additional district.[671] For example, they may argue that the tribal differences between themselves and other communities within their district means that there is insufficient cooperation or resource-sharing between themselves and their neighbours.[672] Where the 'other'

[670] As discussed by Cornes and Sandler (Cornes and Sandler, *The Theory of Externalities, Public Goods, and Club Goods*.), identity can be the basis on which a club is formed, allowing for the capture of the benefits that accrue to member of a club good – such as a newly-created district.
[671] Boone and Nyeme, 'Land Institutions and Political Ethnicity in Africa: Evidence from Tanzania'.
[672] Habyarimana et al., *Coethnicity: Diversity and the Dilemmas of Collective Action*.

community is one that holds the balance of leadership roles in the local LC5 and district-level public service roles, a community can argue that they are being disadvantaged or their needs ignored on the basis of their tribal difference. Having made this claim, districts can successfully argue the need for an additional district for themselves – their own tribal group – rather than remaining in a district with others who would seek to disadvantage them.

In this way, tribal groups have a substantial incentive to make two distinctions based on tribe. The first is an incentive to self-identify; that is, to delineate themselves as a distinct group. The second is to distance themselves from neighbours: having self-identified as a distinct group, they must then further differentiate from their neighbours' tribal identity.[673] By deciding to self-identify as a distinct tribe, and to attach a label to the self-identified group in the form of a name for the tribe, communities can draw on tribal identities that have not been formally recognised for some time.[674] By claiming this identity, and using it as the basis for seeking the creation of a new district, communities can leverage the decentralisation process in ways that allow them to self-define as a group with the power to capture state resources. [675]

New districts and alliance-building

A further advantage for communities that are able to obtain a new district via self-identifying as a distinct tribal identity is that this practice generates power and recognition for their tribal leaders. By self-identifying as a distinct tribal group, and one that differs from its neighbours in important ways, groups' leaders are propelled into a higher status. No longer elders within the domain of a larger tribal group, leaders of newly-identifying tribes are able to claim positions of authority and power within a new identity. In this way, communities that seek to gain a new district via self-identification along tribal lines are engaging in two forms of nearness and identity. Firstly, through gaining an additional district they gain proximity to the formal mechanisms of government, such as having a new district council installed nearby to their village. Secondly, the creation of a new district that is based on a tribe claiming that they are

[673] Boone and Nyeme, 'Land Institutions and Political Ethnicity in Africa: Evidence from Tanzania'.
[674] Ahikire, 'Localised or Localising Democracy'.
[675] Chazan and Rothchild, *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa*.

disadvantaged generates a newly powerful group of tribal leaders for the new tribe, who are then responsible for decision-making on issues related to tribal identity.[676] As explained by an Assistant Director at LGFC[677], rather than having to travel a long distance to access tribal elders of the former tribal group, tribal elders are now locally available, newly recognised, and able to assume the important social roles performed by tribal leaders. In this way, communities are able to access more proximate tribal leadership and decision-making, as much as they are able to access more proximate formal governance and institutions of the state. The leveraging of the decentralisation process to create an extra district has brought tribal institutions 'nearer to the people', as much as formal state institutions. For groups whose tribe identity is contested, gaining formal recognition in the form of a new district can be an important step in establishing the identity of the group.[678] As explained[679] by a district Human Resource Officer, a disputed tribe can gain formal legitimacy as a distinct tribe, by having a new district established based on its geographic space.

In this way, a group that has long been denied the formal recognition of their tribal identity is able to assert their claim to status of a group. By leveraging this group identity into the creation of a new district under their control, they lay claim not just to their self-identity, but to the assets and resources of the state in the name of this identity.

New districts as peacekeeping: Recognition of tribal groups

From the perspective of the central government, the interaction between decentralisation and the political economy that leads to the creation of districts based on tribal group boundaries serves its own purpose. The central government is able to use the creation of new districts, and the awarding of these districts to self-identifying tribes, as a mechanism for achieving two goals. Firstly, it can be used to maintain peaceful relationships between neighbouring tribes, by clarifying boundaries and

[676] Nsibambi, *Decentralisation and Civil Society in Uganda : The Quest for Good Governance*.
[677] *Pers.Comm.* Interview with author, number 69. 10 May 2016.
[678] Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006'.
[679] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 8. 4 February 2016.

resource allocations between them.[680] Secondly, the creation of new districts for tribal groups can be used to reduce sub-national resistance to the central government, by surrendering a small amount of control over resources to defined groups.[681]

Regarding the first of these, by creating a new district and awarding this district to a self-defined tribe, the central government is able to use the decentralisation process as a proxy for solving disputes between tribes.[682] Where there are neighbouring tribal groups that dispute land boundaries, resource allocation by the district government, or another form of control over resources, the central government is able to mitigate these disputes.[683] The creation of an additional district can be awarded to a group that feels aggrieved by its neighbours, or feels that its territory has been in some way impeded. The case of the Iteso and Jopadhola communities in Tororo District, as described earlier, is an example of how such a dispute can lead to a claim for new-district creation. In creating an additional district on these grounds, the central government is able to reduce the severity and longevity of disputes between neighbouring groups, using the decentralisation system to achieve this. The implementation of decentralisation has, in this way, been affected by the political economy in Uganda, where tensions between tribal groups are resolved by the manipulation of decentralisation via the creation of additional districts.

Secondly, the central government is able to use the creation of an additional district to placate areas that may be dissatisfied with the current government, and the resources it is able to provide. This is particularly important in areas of Uganda that have been historically restive, or are perceived as being under-privileged and ignored relative to the rest of Uganda.[684] Areas in the north and north-east of Uganda, while being the most sparsely-populated area of the country, have seen the creation of a large number of districts, as illustrated in the map of Ugandan districts on page 29. By using the creation of additional districts as a mechanism to transfer resources to areas of Uganda that have long felt themselves to be marginalised, the central government

[680] Grossman and Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation'.
[681] Cammack et al., 'Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006'.
[682] Branch and Cheeseman, 'Democratisation, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya'.
[683] Boone, *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*.
[684] Crawford and Hartmann, *Decentralisation in Africa: A Pathway Out of Poverty and Conflict?*

is able to leverage the decentralisation system to further its popularity in disadvantaged regions of Uganda. When combined with policies that are designed to reduce the inequality between the north of Uganda and more prosperous areas in the south, such as the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), the creation of additional districts in the northern regions of Uganda have facilitated the transfer of resources to poorer regions. However, as described[685] by a District Deputy CAO in an interview, the comparatively high levels of poverty in the northern regions of Uganda means that these districts tend to be the most affected by low staffing numbers, low revenue raising and low staffing capacity that have been described in section 6.2. The creation of additional districts without due regard for the financial viability of these districts has generated a large number of poorly-resourced and less-effective districts.

Section conclusion: District proliferation as a tool for self-identification

This section has discussed the ways in which groups of citizens self-identify as a distinct tribe in order to gain access to resources and power, or to bring assets nearer to themselves. Importantly, the use of a tribal identity in order to argue for the creation of an additional district may not be the first preference of the community; this may be utilised only after other attempts to claim a new district have been frustrated. By seeking the creation of an additional administrative unit on the basis of their shared tribal group, groups are able to claim a shared identity of their own, and to differentiate themselves from other groups of citizens. In effect, the practice of using differences between tribal groups as the basis for creating a new administrative unit leads to the formalisation of tribal differences within the community. The borders of administrative units start to overlap with the borders between tribal groups. The deepening of divisions between different tribes are therefore both incentivised, and formalised and made permanent, via the creation of additional districts.

The decentralisation process has thus come to influence the national political-economy, by giving parts of the community an incentive to differentiate themselves from their neighbours in order to be awarded an additional district or sub-county. The political context in Uganda has in turn affected the implementation of decentralisation,

[685] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 16. 10 February 2016.

as tribal groups that have long sought to be recognised as independent from their neighbours are able to achieve this goal through leveraging the decentralisation system. The interaction between decentralisation and the local political context has therefore generated an unexpected outcome: the creation of districts on the basis of tribal identity, which are therefore formalised and institutionalised, through district proliferation.

7.7 Chapter Conclusion: District proliferation as a multi-actor political and economic strategy

> Unless the Ugandan population start appreciating that having a district does not translate into service delivery, we will continue having this challenge where every other sub-county, village, or homestead wants to become a district.
>
> - Principal Economist, World Bank, Kampala[686]

The phenomenon of district creation persists in Uganda despite the acknowledgement from a range of sources of the challenges this proliferation causes. The rapid creation of additional districts has exacerbated the low staffing levels of districts, their low capacity for raising local revenue, and the crowding-out of development expenditure by wages. Nonetheless, the creation of districts and sub-counties continues apace. This chapter has raised the advantages accruing to actors across the Ugandan political economy from the creation of additional districts, as were revealed by the research undertaken for this thesis. Through interviews, household-level surveys and quantitative data, the incentives and motivations of actors emerge, and indicate that the creation of new districts is driven by a range of complex factors. Principally, the creation of new districts is driven by both supply and demand: supply from political leaders keen to implement a political survival strategy; and demand from communities who see a new district as a path that they perceive will lead to resource access and livelihood creation. Where these incentives and motivations coincide, the creation of new districts emerges.

The existing field of literature[687] relating to district proliferation in Uganda draws on the perspectives of elites, and so positions district proliferation as arising from the establishment of patronage networks. By incorporating the perspectives of non-elite

[686] *Pers.Comm*. Interview with author, number 81. 27 May 2016
[687] For example Elliott Green, 'Patronage, District Creation, and Reform in Uganda', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45, no. 1 (1 March 2010): 83–103, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-009-9058-8; and Guy Grossman and Janet I. Lewis, 'Administrative Unit Proliferation', *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 1 (February 2014): 196–217, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000567.

actors at the sub-county and village levels, this research argues that the demand and supply of new districts in fact arises from the motivations of a wide range of actors.

For political actors, these strategies focus on political survival, and accordingly on the supply of additional districts in ways that are politically beneficial (even when acknowledging the financial problems caused by the rapid creation of new districts). For district-level political actors, the creation of a new district creates additional opportunities to gain access to an LC5 council seat, and so direct resources towards key allies. At the central level, elected officials are able to gain popular support by creating an additional district, or by committing to do so if elected. The creation of additional districts presents an opportunity to reward loyal patronage networks with employment opportunities and access to resources following the creation of a new district. Conversely, a new district can be withheld from regions that are less supportive of the ruling party. For NRM, in particular, the supply of additional districts to strategically-chosen locations supports the core party goals of delivering wealth creation and security to the community. The creation of additional districts emerges as the outcome of the interaction between decentralisation and the political survival objectives and strategies of elected actors.

For non-elite actors, at the district level and down to the village, the creation of an additional district assists in implementing an economic strategy for accessing resources and generating rural or urban livelihoods. New districts and sub-counties bring the chance to access marketplaces, participate in economic activity related to the establishment of a new headquarters, and benefit from government contracts. A smaller district reduces competition in access to agricultural inputs, and to accessing public services.[688] However, where elites are more able to benefit from the creation of a new district than non-elite actors (such as gaining access to formal employment), the creation of a new district can have the effect of worsening inequality and social exclusion between elite and non-elite actors. In this sense, the creation of a new district functions as a 'club good', in which members can derive benefits from new-district

[688] Examples of the pervasiveness of this argument are found in local media, where the remoteness or size of a district is frequently cited as a reason for the creation of an additional district. For example, 'Madi-Okollo to be Elevated to District Status', *New Vision*, 21 February 2011, https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1015975/madi-okollo-elevated-district-status

creation, but non-members are excluded from realising these benefits. Potential consequences of this creation of districts on the basis of tribal identities are that groups are actively incentivised to identify as separate from their neighbours; and, having gained a district 'for' their tribe, the boundaries between tribal groups are formalised and institutionalised in the form of a district boundary.

At the grassroot level, the creation of an additional administrative unit is perceived to bring the delivery of public services, such as a new primary school that must[689] be provided to a new sub-county. In this sense, the creation of a new district is perceived as having the potential to bring services that have heretofore not been provided by the decentralisation system. From the perspective of citizens at the household level in the studied field sites, the creation of an additional district may bring with it the public services and economic opportunities that are the hallmarks of development itself. As a result, villages in Uganda have begun to seek the creation of a new district or sub-county, via lobbying their local MPs or District Councils. In some locations, the desire for obtaining a new district is powerful enough that communities have begun to strengthen their tribal self-identification, and to argue that they are a distinct group compared to their neighbours. However, paradoxically, because the creation of new districts has been so rapid, many districts have weak financial resources with which to finance service delivery. The principal beneficiaries of the creation of a new district may in fact be sub-national elites, who are able to benefit from the employment opportunities presented by the creation of an additional district. The rapid creation of new districts may have the effect of worsening social and economic inequality between the elites who are able to benefit from new employment, and villagers who are not – and in fact may face worse service delivery by poorer governments. Nonetheless, villagers report that their perceptions of the creation of new districts is that services will 'be brought' nearer to the population. Demand for the creation of additional districts is thus fuelled by the interaction between decentralisation and the economic strategies of households and non-elite actors. It is hoped that the creation of additional, smaller districts will genuinely bring the benefits of development 'nearer to the people'.

[689] According to the minimum service standards for public services, established by the national government. 'Service Standards and Service Delivery Standards for the Health Sector 2016 | Knowledge Management Portal'.

Chapter Eight:

Conclusion:
District Proliferation: Ever-Nearer to the People

> Alongside these formal models, and intertwined with them, are a host of instrumental uses to which the state apparatus is put, on behalf of individuals, cliques, factions, and class interests. Here the power of the state apparatus is put to use to the benefit of some, and to the detriment of others; the bureaucracy becomes the vehicle for the exercise of a particular kind of power; and this not as some kind of mistake or pathology, but as an essential part of which the bureaucracy in fact is, what it is all about.
>
> - *Ferguson, 'The Anti-Politics Machine'*[690]

In addressing the research question, *How does the political economy interact with decentralisation in Uganda?*, this thesis has addressed the rapid creation of new districts and sub-counties in Uganda since decentralisation was introduced in 1992. Research has drawn on political economy analysis to analyse an apparent paradox: the continuing creation of new districts, even though the economic and financial costs of this phenomenon are widely acknowledged. The research has analysed the strategies that have been put in place by a wide range of actors in the Ugandan context, to improve their own political survival and economic livelihoods. When combined, these strategies have had the effect of driving both the demand for, and supply of, additional districts.

This thesis has argued that the outcome of district proliferation is not generated by the actions of elites alone; non-elite actors are likewise motivated to seek the creation of additional administrative units. Rural and urban livelihoods alike are

[690] James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994). Page 194.

improved by the creation of new districts, bringing new economic opportunities and options to actors at the sub-national level. For elite actors, the creation of additional districts presents opportunities for political survival, in the form of patronage networks, reduced competition for parliamentary seats, and contributions to achieving the goals of the NRM Manifesto. In some locations, this drive for new districts has included seeking the creation of a district for a particular tribal group, after a group has been able to self-identify as a different, and marginalised, tribal group compared to their neighbours.

This conclusion chapter begins by summarising the dual-directional nature of the interaction between decentralisation and the wider political economy, and analysing the phenomenon of district proliferation. A comparison of the research to the existing literature is then described, followed by commentary on areas for further research. Finally, this chapter describes the wider applicability of the research. The notion of district proliferation is identified as a mechanism for advancing political and economic goals, and for gaining 'visibility' for a community, as a strategy for leveraging access to resources.

8.1 The dual interaction of decentralisation and the political economy

Returning to the research question posed in Chapter One that this thesis has sought to investigate – *How does the political economy interact with decentralisation in Uganda?* – this section will address the dual-directional approach implied by this research question. Decentralisation is not introduced into a vacuum; rather, it is introduced into an existing social, political, economic, historical and cultural context, and will both affect that context and be affected by it. This thesis has argued both directions of this dual-directional relationship: that decentralisation both affects the political economy in which it is implemented, and in turn, decentralisation is affected by the local political economy context.

Decentralisation affects the political economy: Comparing theories and results

The introduction of decentralisation into a country will necessarily affect the dynamics of decision-making over resources, processes of reform and change, and the authority to define priorities. Decisions on the expenditure of public funds, that were once made exclusively at the centre, will now be made in conjunction with leaders at the sub-national level. These actors will have their own interests and objectives, generating a need for negotiation and dialogue between different levels of government.[691]

According to the existing theories and rationales relating to decentralisation, as described in section 2.1, there are two lines of argument that describe the ways in which decentralisation should affect the political-economy context in which it is implemented. They are, firstly, that decentralisation will generate improved responsiveness of government to local development priorities and needs, such that service delivery will be better targeted to these priorities.[692] In this sense, plans and budgets for the expenditure of public funds will theoretically be conducted from the grassroot upwards, reversing the hierarchy of control of resource allocation. Secondly, decentralisation is argued to improve the participation of local communities in

[691] Asiimwe and Musisi, *Decentralisation and Transformation of Governance in Uganda*.
[692] Faguet, Jean-Paul, 'Transformation from Below in Bangladesh: Decentralization, Local Governance, and Systemic Change', *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 6 (2017): 1668–94.

governance, with shortened paths for communications between citizens and their elected leaders.[693] The greater proximity of local governments to citizens will reduce the barriers to communication and consultation between these groups, and reduce the transaction costs of this communication. Projects that are conducted using public funding will theoretically be scrutinised and overseen by the citizenry, rather than only by the bureaucracy. Combined with local elections, citizens will have the power to hold government to account for their expenditure of public funding.

However, the results of research undertaken for this thesis suggest that these theoretical objectives of service delivery and participatory governance are not being realised in the studied field sites under the current decentralisation models in Uganda. Firstly, regarding participation, consultation and the responsiveness of governments to communities, research participants in the household survey described poor-quality service delivery, low levels of participation in bottom-up planning processes, and governments that have failed to respond to complaints about the poor quality of local public services. The intended effects of decentralisation on political and economic relationships, in which the citizen at the grassroot is engaged in planning, budgeting, monitoring and oversight, are not reflected in these results within the six studied communities. Instead, research participants report that the high levels of conditionality in funding transferred from the centre to the periphery prevent local governments from being responsive to local needs.

When these qualitative results are combined with quantitative results from the national budget outcomes, this thesis has argued that sub-national governments have not been adequately resourced or given sufficient discretionary authority over expenditure to be able to respond to local development priorities. In the presence of top-down planning and budgeting, citizens' enthusiasm for participation has waned, and expenditure on decentralised public services has fallen as a percentage of the national budget. While the introduction of decentralisation has affected the political economy in the studied locations, it has not generated its intended benefits. Local governments have been asked to handle additional responsibilities, thus generating raised expectations about their role in governance, but without receiving adequate

[693] Ahmad et al., 'Decentralization And Service Delivery: Policy Research Working Papers'.

resources for this to be possible. The purported benefits of decentralisation have not been realised at the grassroot or sub-national level, causing frustration and disappointment amongst these actors.

The political economy affects decentralisation

The second aspect of the dual-directional analysis underpinning the research question asks in which ways the political economy has affected decentralisation as a policy in Uganda. The research undertaken for this thesis has analysed the ways in which the outcomes of decentralisation have diverged from its original rationales and goals, with a specific focus on the phenomenon of the very-rapid creation of new districts.

Returning to the literature review described in Chapter Two, decentralisation has been framed by different authors using different lenses. For some, decentralisation is understood to be an technical reform, implemented in order to achieve economic or governance reform goals. The political economy context of a specific location will accordingly have little bearing on the outcomes of decentralisation reforms: decentralisation will achieve its goals of governance and economic improvements regardless of the context in which it is implemented.

The results generated by this research, however, reveal that the trajectory of decentralisation as a policy in Uganda has been noticeably altered since its commencement in 1992. The number of districts has almost quadrupled, and continues to rise. The proliferation of new administrative units at the sub-national level has been generated by the actions of a range of individuals, from the highest levels of government to the village, as individuals pursue their own self-interest. For elected leaders, the creation of a new district that can then be ‘given’ to a community represents a political survival strategy. For district-level elites, a new district in their area represents opportunities for employment, and thus access to resources. For those living in urban or urban-marginal areas, a new district brings markets closer, and represents the improvement of their urban livelihood strategy. For the village level, the creation of additional districts comes with the potential for the delivery of new services,

where the delivery of public services and utilities has not been successful as yet. The creation of additional districts is framed as the product of the supply of districts from political elites, and the demand for districts from non-elite and grassroot actors. The coinciding incentives of these actors has fuelled the proliferation of additional districts, and has fundamentally altered decentralisation as a policy.

The outcome of decentralisation interacting with the political economy: District proliferation

This thesis has argued that the rapid creation of new districts and sub-counties since the 1990s has been driven by the interaction of decentralisation and the political economy. There is a substantial financial burden imposed by the creation of a new district, and negative impacts on the transaction costs of service delivery conducted by ever-smaller district governments. The continued creation of additional districts, despite these well-known financial impacts, speaks to the political dividends that are created for elite actors from the creation of a new district. This thesis has found that actors across a wide spectrum of the political economy have seen potential benefits for themselves in the creation of a new district. Rather than being favourable to elite actors alone, a new district brings visibility and the opportunity to potentially claim state resources to non-elite and village-level actors, as much as to the elite. Accordingly, a wide range of actors have the incentive to seek the creation of a new district. The creation of new districts is the policy result of the coinciding incentives of a large number of actors, each of whom individually seeks the creation of a new district in order to maximise their own motivations and goals. The political economy has reached a point at which new districts are being rapidly created; this is unlikely to change unless the incentives of a substantial number of actors change to an alternative outcome.

In addition to the financial challenges caused by the rapid creation of new districts, the results arising from this research suggest two unintended consequences that arise from district proliferation. Firstly, an incentive is created for those who would seek a new district for their community to identify as being a distinct tribe from neighbouring groups, in order to claim that ‘we’ need ‘our own’ district. Where new districts are created according to the boundaries between tribal groups, these

boundaries are then formalised and institutionalised in the form of new districts. Secondly, the creation of a new district allows sub-national elites, such as those who are well-educated, to gain access to resources such as salaries and contracts. However, non-elite members of society may be comparatively unable to derive these benefits. The creation of an additional district can therefore lead to the worsening of social exclusion and inequality, where some community members are able to benefit from the economic opportunities arising from a new district, but others are not. In this sense, it is theorised that a new district is analogous to a club good: members are able to derive a benefit, but non-members are excluded from realising the benefits from the good.

8.2 Decentralisation and the grassroot: Differences from existing literature

Throughout this thesis, arguments have been made that differ from those made in the existing body of literature relating to decentralisation in Uganda. The research differs from the existing literature in two important ways: in relation to its underpinning assumptions about the nature of decentralisation; and regarding the research methodology.

Decentralisation as a political mechanism

Firstly, this thesis has moved away from the assumption expressed by many authors described in section 2.1, that frame decentralisation as a technical process that can be implemented to achieve governance-related goals. Since the 1980s, authors[694] have argued that decentralisation can be used as a mechanism to achieve goals such as improving the efficiency of governance, reducing the scale of the central government, reducing poverty, and disrupting corruption and patronage networks. These authors have linked decentralisation to reforms undertaken for SAPs, or as part of broader 'good governance' reforms, under the assumption that decentralisation will not have broader implications for the political economy. Following from this, several researchers have argued that decentralisation in the Ugandan context was introduced as part of a suite of broader economic and governance reforms that were similar to those implemented in other national contexts.

In contrast, as described in section 2.3, other researchers frame Ugandan decentralisation in a different light. Rather than decentralisation being imposed by external actors, and rather than having governance goals at its heart, these authors argue that decentralisation's origins in Uganda are both domestic, and explicitly political. For these authors, decentralisation was introduced in the early stages of

[694] See for example Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, 'Relocating Participation within a Radical Politics of Development', *Development and Change*, 2005, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0012-155X.2005.00410.x; G. Shabbir Cheema and Dennis A. Rondinelli, *Decentralizing Governance: Emerging Concepts and Practices* (Brookings Institution Press, 2007); George A Larbi, 'The New Public Management Approach and Crisis States', 1999; and Gita Gopal and World Bank, eds., *Decentralization in Client Countries: An Evaluation of World Bank Support, 1990-2007* (Washington, D.C: World Bank, 2008).

NRM's rule, as a strategy for gaining popular support and claiming legitimacy in the aftermath of the Bush War.

This latter framing of decentralisation – that its core goals are political, and focused on domestic considerations – suggests that there is an important place in the analysis of decentralisation for considering its implications for informal institutions. As argued by Hyden,[695] informal institutions emerge from a local historical context, and determine a great deal of the 'norms' of behaviour for citizens in that context. District proliferation is thus best analysed within the context of a political economy framework, in which the specific, indigenous, domestic, political logic of the way decentralisation is implemented in the Ugandan context can be identified and analysed. If analysts of decentralisation in Uganda continue to regard decentralisation as an technical, externally-imposed mechanism, the importance of informal institutions to the trajectory of decentralisation in Uganda may be inadvertently discounted.

Research methods: Inclusion of the grassroot perspective

Rather than focusing on the perspective of elite actors and their motivations, this research has sought to appreciate the challenges and outcomes of decentralisation from the grassroot perspective. A household-level survey was conducted, in addition to elite interviews and quantitative analysis, to seek villagers' perspectives on decentralisation, service delivery and governance. Participants in six field sites described their experiences of: poor-quality and unaffordable service delivery; elected officials who communicate with them only in the lead-up to elections; as well as the advantages that can be derived from interpersonal connections to powerful individuals and tribes.

The perspectives and opinions of households revealed marked differences between the goals of decentralisation from policymakers' viewpoints, and the lived experiences of those who are the recipients of public services and governance models. While elite actors expressed in interviews their confidence that participatory planning and budgeting is undertaken at local levels, villagers in the studied

[695] Hyden, 'Institutions, Power and Policy Outcomes in Africa'.

communities reported low levels of participation, rare village meetings, and attendance at meetings by invitation only. As a result of the inclusion of household perspectives in the research, doubt is cast on concepts such as participation and responsiveness: concepts that are central to the rationales for implementing decentralisation.

The inclusion of the perspectives of household members into the research has also revealed that when viewed from the grassroot, district proliferation presents a perceived opportunity for non-elite members of the community to gain an advantage. Individuals at the household, and non-elite citizens at the sub-county and district, believe that they are also able to leverage advantages from the creation of an additional district or sub-county, such as the creation of new public services. Rather than being perceived as an attempt by central-government and district-level elites to control resources and gain political power, new-district creation is revealed as a strategy for a wide range of actors. District proliferation is shown to be as much a product of the demand for new districts, emanating from the grassroot, as it arises from the supply of new districts by elites.

8.3 Areas for further research

The research undertaken for this thesis has included the viewpoints of a wide range of actors; nonetheless, there are avenues of enquiry that could not be pursued within the scope of a single research project. Further areas for research following from this thesis are described as follows.

Firstly, further research could better compare the experiences of newer districts with those of older districts, in terms of their experiences in managing responsive and participatory governance. For this thesis, the author chose to focus on districts that had already been created by the commencement of multi-party elections in 2006, in order to be able to focus on 'older' districts. This enabled the author to draw on a large database of documents and budget reports, such as annual budgets and workplans for the three studied districts. Budget data, such as approved estimates and releases, were also readily accessible for Uganda's older districts. This wealth of data would not have been available if one or more of the selected districts had been created more recently. Many new districts are yet to produce an annual budget or annual workplan, and (by definition) do not have historical budget data available in order to identify fiscal trends. While it was a decision of the author to draw comparisons between older districts, future research could benefit from comparisons amongst newer districts, or between new and old districts, provided that a long history of budgetary and planning documents are not required for the research.

Secondly, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to include the viewpoints and governance challenges of the parish/LC2 level of government. Further research could benefit from an examination of this level of government, where changes begin to emerge from the wholly-rural experience of villages/LC1s. The LC2 is the first council to consolidate the development plans of a range of villages, which requires of them that choices be made amongst competing priorities. Useful research could be conducted on how these choices are made.

8.4 Wider applicability and contribution of the research

Decentralisation is a policy mechanism in wide use worldwide. As discussed in section 6.4, the introduction of decentralisation requires significant expenditures on sub-national government structures, salaries, offices and equipment. In the context of a developing country with limited resources, this expenditure can have a high opportunity cost in in terms of foregone expenditure on social services, utilities or infrastructure. Despite this expense, decentralisation is thought to improve public service delivery and the quality of governance, and it continues to be implemented in many national contexts. This thesis has described the effects of decentralisation on the political economy, and vice-versa, in the Ugandan context, with Chapters Four to Seven describing in detail the contribution to the existing field of knowledge in this field. District proliferation is revealed by the research to result from the intersecting incentives and motivations of a range of actors in the Ugandan political economy. Each of these actors seeks the creation of a new district in order to support their own interests, in the form of their political survival or economic livelihoods strategy. This section discusses the wider applicability of this research, in seeking to understand the implementation of decentralisation and, in particular, the phenomenon of district proliferation.

The grassroot: Careful understanding, and strategic action

The inclusion of grassroot perspectives in the research undertaken for this thesis has illuminated the gulf between the theories, and the practical realities, of decentralisation in the Ugandan context. Respondents to the household survey describe selective or non-existent participation, government non-responsiveness to complaints, and poor-quality public services; in short, the goals and rationales of decentralisation are not consistently realised at the grassroot level. This suggests that policymakers and researchers are to be wary of assuming that decentralisation will deliver these goals, without testing the claims of central elites against the lived experiences of those at the grassroot. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that the introduction of consultation and participation *mechanisms* – such as village planning

meetings – are sufficient for the genuine realisation of consultation and participation themselves.

Furthermore, research and policy must be mindful of assuming passivity on the part of rural households. In the household survey, villagers articulated strategies that they pursue in order to improve their own standards of living. In the absence of the high-quality public services they require, villagers look to the actions and promises of elected leaders, whose claim is that district proliferation brings services 'nearer to the people'. As a result, gaining an additional administrative unit in the region in which they live becomes villagers' goal, as a platform for subsequently demanding the delivery of services.[696] Participants in the household-level survey undertaken for this research demonstrated a nuanced understanding of their livelihoods approaches, and strategic approaches to gaining the best possible advantage for themselves from existing governance arrangements. Just as for elites, non-elites likewise approach decentralisation with an eye to maximising their own utility, and undertake actions to achieve these goals.

"I take my side, that fellow takes his side, and we both survive": Economic incentives and social inclusion

The research conducted for this thesis also draws attention to the possibility of governance reforms having unintended negative effects for equality and social inclusion. While the creation of additional districts and sub-counties in Uganda has allowed elite actors to derive benefits in terms of formal employment and access to resources, for non-elites, a different picture emerges. Non-elite actors, particularly those who work mainly in subsistence farming, have not necessarily realised benefits from the creation of new administrative units. Without the education background or skill set to benefit from formal government employment, supporting contracts, or commercial opportunities, rural farmers are excluded from the 'club good' of a new district. Social inclusion can be inadvertently worsened, and the poorest left further

[696] However, the rapid proliferation of districts, and the fiscal burden this generates, may make the future delivery of services weaker than is the case for older districts. Citizens' understanding of the benefits that may accrue to their community following the creation of a new district, such as the delivery of additional services, may not be realised in practice.

behind in the economic growth narrative, as a result of policies that in fact aim to achieve improved standards of living. The uneven distribution of the benefits of district proliferation results from it being driven by individuals' pursuit of their own self-interest: those who are the most able to self-advocate are the most likely to benefit.

'Steady progress': Political survival as policy reality

This thesis has demonstrated that when governance reforms intersect with political competition, the self-preservation instinct of political leaders will determine the manner in which such reforms are implemented. For political leaders, the introduction of new a reform – particularly one with the broad impacts of decentralisation – presents an opportunity for harnessing political forces. Far from considering decentralisation to be an administrative and technical reform, elected leaders in the Ugandan context have demonstrated their perception of it as an intensely political mechanism. The continued proliferation of additional districts, even where this is known to cause fiscal imbalances, and even following a brief moratorium, is testament to the perceived political benefit of supplying a new district. Furthermore, decentralisation has become intertwined with the achievement of the current NRM government's central platforms: security and stability, and wealth creation. Decentralisation has therefore been repurposed as a strategy for achieving the overarching economic and political goals of the ruling party. The popularity of the creation of new districts – both their supply, by elected leaders, and demand from the broader population – suggests that the proliferation of districts will continue unabated for the foreseeable future.

8.5 Conclusion: Nearer to the people

The story of decentralisation in Uganda includes both disputed origins, and an uncertain future. Within the existing literature on Ugandan decentralisation, some argue that the story has domestic origins, and is political; it aims to draw the Ugandan population into NRM's steady progress towards stability and wealth creation. A new district makes a community visible, and from this visibility comes a legitimate claim on resources.

For others, the origins of decentralisation in Uganda are international, and its goals are governance-oriented; it generates accountability, efficiency, responsiveness and participation. This second perspective, dominated by analysis conducted from the viewpoint of the elite, views decentralisation through an instrumentalist lens. This body of literature asks how decentralisation can be utilised to improve the quality of governance and the inclusiveness of economic growth. Decentralisation is positioned as a tool for achieving better-targeted public services, and more consultative participatory governance.

However, framing decentralisation from this top-down viewpoint risks undervaluing the experiences of those the grassroot level, whose perspectives present a different image of the impact of decentralisation. Viewed from underneath, tangible improvements to service standards remain elusive, and government remains remote. Villagers' impressions depict decentralisation as not having yet reached the grassroot: 'nearness' to the people has not yet been achieved. From the grassroot perspective, there is a need for more districts to be created: until decentralisation, and services, and government, and development itself, reaches the grassroot; until voices from the village are heard in Kampala.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of districts with region, parent district and date of commencement

New districts take effect on 1 July of the given year

Number	Name	Parent district	Region	Date of effect
1.	Kampala	n/a	Central	Pre-1986
2.	Jinja	n/a	East	Pre-1986
3.	Mbale	n/a	East	Pre-1986
4.	Moroto	n/a	North	Pre-1986
5.	Arua	n/a	North	Pre-1986
6.	Bombo	n/a	Central	Pre-1986
7.	Gulu	n/a	North	Pre-1986
8.	Masaka	n/a	West	Pre-1986
9.	Mbarara	n/a	West	Pre-1986
10.	Kasese	n/a	West	Pre-1986
11.	Kitgum	n/a	North	Pre-1986
12.	Kabarole	n/a	West	Pre-1986
13.	Iganga	n/a	West	Pre-1986
14.	Hoima	n/a	West	Pre-1986
15.	Kabale	n/a	West	Pre-1986
16.	Mubende	n/a	Central	Pre-1986
17.	Tororo	n/a	East	Pre-1986
18.	Bushenyi	n/a	West	Pre-1986
19.	Soroti	n/a	North	Pre-1986
20.	Luweero	n/a	Central	Pre-1986
21.	Mukono	n/a	Central	Pre-1986
22.	Mpigi	n/a	Central	Pre-1986
23.	Rukungiri	n/a	West	Pre-1986
24.	Kamuli	n/a	East	Pre-1986
25.	Kotido	n/a	North	Pre-1986
26.	Kapchorwa	n/a	North	Pre-1986
27.	Lira	n/a	North	Pre-1986
28.	Apac	n/a	North	Pre-1986
29.	Nebbi	n/a	North	Pre-1986
30.	Bundibugyo	n/a	West	Pre-1986
31.	Rakai	n/a	West	Pre-1986
32.	Kumi	n/a	East	Pre-1986
33.	Masindi	n/a	West	Pre-1986
34.	Kalangala	Masaka	West	1990
35.	Kibaale	Hoima	West	1991
36.	Kiboga	Mubende	Central	1991
37.	Kisoro	Kabale	West	1991
38.	Pallisa	Tororo	East	1991
39.	Ntungamo	Bushenyi	West	1994

40.	Bugiri	Iganga	West	1997
41.	Busia	Tororo	East	1997
42.	Katakwi	Soroti	East	1997
43.	Nakasongola	Luweero	Central	1997
44.	Sembabule	Masaka	West	1997
45.	Kamwenge	Kabarole	West	2000
46.	Kayunga	Mukono	Central	2000
47.	Pader	Kitgum	North	2000
48.	Kyenjojo	Kabarole	West	2000
49.	Mayuge	Iganga	West	2000
50.	Sironko	Mbale	East	2000
51.	Wakiso	Mpigi	Central	2000
52.	Yumbe	Arua	North	2000
53.	Kaberamaido	Soroti	East	2000
54.	Kanungu	Rukungiri	West	2000
55.	Nakapiripirit	Moroto	North	2000
56.	Ibanda	Mbarara	West	2005
57.	Kabingo	Mbarara	West	2005
58.	Kiruhura	Mbarara	West	2005
59.	Kaabong	Kotido	North	2005
60.	Kaliro	Kamuli	North	2005
61.	Koboko	Arua	North	2005
62.	Butaleja	Tororo	East	2005
63.	Nakaseke	Luweero	Central	2005
64.	Amuria	Katakwi	East	2005
65.	Mityana	Mubende	Central	2005
66.	Manafwa	Mbale	East	2005
67.	Amolatar	Lira	North	2005
68.	Bukwa	Kapchorwa	East	2005
69.	Busiki	Iganga	West	2005
70.	Amuru	Gulu	North	2006
71.	Budaka	Pallisa	East	2006
72.	Oyam	Apac	North	2006
73.	Abim	Kotido	North	2006
74.	Namutumba	Iganga	East	2006
75.	Dokolo	Lira	North	2006
76.	Bulisa	Masindi	West	2006
77.	Maracha	Arua	North	2006
78.	Bukedea	Kumi	East	2006
79.	Bududa	Mbale	East	2006
80.	Lyantonde	Rakai	Central	2006
81.	Amudat	Nakapiritpirit	North	2010
82.	Buikwe	Mukono	Central	2010
83.	Buyende	Kamuli	East	2010
84.	Kyegegwa	Kyenjojo	West	2010
85.	Lamwo	Kitgum	North	2010
86.	Otuke	Lira	North	2010
87.	Zombo	Nebbi	North	2010

88.	Alebtong	Lira	North	2010
89.	Bulambuli	Sironko	East	2010
90.	Buvuma	Mukono	Central	2010
91.	Gomba	Mpigi	Central	2010
92.	Kiryandongo	Masindi	West	2010
93.	Luuka	Iganga	East	2010
94.	Namanyingo	Bugiri	East	2010
95.	Ntoroko	Bundibugyo	West	2010
96.	Serere	Soroti	East	2010
97.	Kyankwanzi	Kiboga	Central	2010
98.	Kalungu	Masaka	Central	2010
99.	Lwengo	Masaka	Central	2010
100.	Bukomansimbi	Masaka	Central	2010
101.	Mitooma	Bushenyi	West	2010
102.	Rubirizi	Bushenyi	West	2010
103.	Ngora	Kumi	East	2010
104.	Napak	Moroto	North	2010
105.	Kibuku	Pallisa	East	2010
106.	Nwoya	Amuru	North	2010
107.	Kole	Apac	North	2010
108.	Butambala	Mpigi	Central	2010
109.	Buhweju	Bushenyi	West	2010
110.	Agago	Pader	North	2010
111.	Kween	Kapchorwa	East	2010
112.	Sheema	Bushenyi	West	2010
113.	Kagadi	Kibaale	West	2016
114.	Kakumiro	Kibaale	West	2016
115.	Omoro	Gulu	North	2016
116.	Rubanda	Kabale	West	2016
117.	Namisindwa	Manafwa	East	2017
118.	Pakwach	Nebbi	North	2017
119.	Butebo	Pallisa	East	2017
120.	Rukiga	Kabale	West	2017
121.	Kyotera	Rakai	West	2017
122.	Bunyangabu	Kabarole	West	2017
123.	Nabilatuk	Nakapiritpirit	North	2018
124.	Bugweri	Iganga	West	2018
125.	Kasanda	Mubende	Central	2018
126.	Kwania	Apac	North	2018
127.	Kapelebyong	Amuria	East	2018
128.	Kikuube	Hoima	West	2018
129.	Obongi	Moyo	North	2019
130.	Kazo	Kirihura	West	2019
131.	Rwampara	Mbarara	West	2019
132.	Kitagwenda	Kamwenge	West	2019
133.	Madi-Okollo	Arua	North	2019
134.	Karenga	Kaabong	North	2019
135.	Lusot	Moroto	North	2019

Appendix B: List of survey questions for household survey

As reported by the Research Assistant:

A. Construction materials of walls, roof and floor
B. Number of rooms in the main house, or huts in the household (as appropriate)
C. From the house, can you still see a road (that a car can pass on)?
D. Approximate distance from nearest public footpath
E. Can you see any nearby sources of water?
F. Can you see any sources of power (electric wires, solar panels)?
G. Is the respondent male or female?

Section 1 – Information about the Household

1. Were you born in this district?
2. If NO – When did you move here?
3. What is your age?
4. How many people live in this household (including children at boarding school, or people working away from home)?
5. (Continued) How many are adults (over 18)?
6. (Continued) How many are children (17 and under)?
7. What is the main type of employment of the adults who live in this household?
8. Which ethnic tribe are you from?
9. Which is your religion?
10. What is the highest level of education you have reached?
11. How long have you lived in this household?
12. Did you build this house [the main house], or was it already built?
13. (Continued) If you built it yourself – Did anyone assist you to build it?
14. Which of these do you have in this household: Electricity Television Stove/cooker Refrigerator Livestock – cow(s) Livestock – goat(s) Livestock – chicken(s) Mattress Water pipe Cell phone Kerosene lanterns or other lights
15. Have you owned this in the past, but have had to sell it: Electricity Television Stove/cooker Refrigerator Livestock – cow(s) Livestock – goat(s) Livestock – chicken(s) Mattress Water pipe Cell phone Kerosene lanterns or other lights

Section 2 – Information about the Village

16. What is the biggest source of income for people in this village?
17. What is the main religion of this village?
18. What is the main tribal group in this village?
19. Do you think there are any poor households in this village?
20. In your opinion, how do you know which households are poor?

Section 3 – Deciding on Development Priorities

21. What do you think are the most important development priorities for this district?

22. How are the development priorities chosen for this district?
23. Do you attend village meetings to decide on the development priorities for the village for the next year?
24. Do most people in the village participate in the meetings about the district's priorities?
25. Who arranges these village meetings?
26. Who speaks at village meetings?
27. What issues are decided at village meetings?
28. How much time in advance before a village meeting do you receive notice of it?
29. How often do village meetings occur?
30. Overall, in your opinion, does the government address the development priorities from this village?

Section 4 – Services in the Village

31. What kinds of public services are there in this village?
32. Who provides these services?
33. If you need to use a health service, do you have to pay fees (in cash)?
34. (*Continued*) If NO, do you have to make a payment by contributing something, other than cash?
35. Have you ever had to miss medical treatment because the fees were too expensive?
36. (*Continued*) Has anyone else in this household had to miss medical treatment because the fees were too expensive?
37. Has there ever been a time you needed a medicine, but there was no stock / supplies?
38. If YES (there was a stock-out) – what do you do?
39. Have you ever made a complaint about a service that was not provided, or that was poor quality?
40. If YES – who did you speak to?
41. If YES – what was the result of your complaint?
42. Do all of the children in this household attend school?
43. If YES: what type of school is it?
44. If not all of your children attend school, why is this?
45. Do you have to pay school fees (in cash)?
46. (*Continued*) If NO, do you have to make a payment by contributing something, such as supplies or paint?
47. Is it hard to find money for school fees?
48. What do you do if you cannot find money for the fees?
49. Have any of your children ever missed school for more than one week?
50. (*Continued*) If YES: why was this?
51. Do you know the head teacher of your children's school?
52. Are you a member of the Parent-Teacher Association of the school?
53. Has there ever been a time when the teacher was absent for more than one week?
54. (*Continued*) If YES: Why was this?

55. If your children reached their school and the teacher has not attended for the day, what do you do?

Section 5 – Community Leaders

56. Do you know the name of the LC5 (District) Chief?
57. Have you ever met the LC5 (District) Chief or any of the LC5 (District) Councillors?
58. Do you know the name of at least one of the National Members of Parliament for this area?
59. Have any of the National Members of Parliament ever visited this area?
60. Have you ever met any of the National Members of Parliament?
61. If YES: in what circumstances?
62. Are any of the National Members of Parliament for this area from the same ethnic tribe as you?
63. Is it important to you that the National Members of Parliament for this area are from the same ethnic tribe as you?
64. Are any of the members of the LC5 (District Council) for this area from the same ethnic tribe as you?
65. Is it important to you that members of the LC5 (District Council) for this area are from the same ethnic tribe as you?
66. Did any of the election candidates visit this village before the election?
67. (*Continued*) If YES: Which level of government were they seeking to be elected to?
68. (*Continued*) If YES: Did they promise that they would bring anything to the village if they were elected?
69. (*Continued*) If YES: Do you expect that they will deliver these things?
70. In your opinion, why have there been no LC1 and LC2 elections since 2001?
71. Do you know (on a personal level) anyone who works in the central government or the national bureaucracy (in Kampala)?
72. Who do you think are the most powerful people in this village?
73. (*Continued*) What makes them powerful?
74. Do any religious groups or NGOs provide any services in this village?
75. (*Continued*) If YES: Do you use these services?
76. (*Continued*) If YES: Do you think these services are better-quality than services provided by the government?

Section 6 – Connections in the Community

77. What is the role of the traditional Kingdoms?
78. Do you think the traditional Kingdoms are important?
79. When you are working at your job, do you prefer to work with people who are from the same ethnic group as you?
80. In your opinion, are some ethnic groups in Uganda more likely to benefit from economic opportunities than others?
81. In your opinion, are some ethnic groups in Uganda more likely to be hold important political roles than other groups?

82. Are there any processes for resolving disputes or conflicts in the village? For example, a dispute over land ownership?
83. (*Continued*) If YES: Who is the person who makes the decisions in these cases?
84. Where do you find out information about what services are available to you?
85. Where do you find out information about political issues?

Section 7 – Forming New Districts

86. In your opinion, do you think there is the right number of districts in Uganda?
87. Would you be happy if another district was created in this area?
88. When a new district is created, who benefits from it?
89. (Continued) Of these options, who benefits the most?
90. When a new district is created, who is made worse off from it?
91. (Continued) Of these options, who loses the most?
92. Do you think the creation of more districts makes service delivery better?
93. Do you think the creation of more districts makes it easier for you to communicate with the government?
94. Do you feel that you are involved in the process of making the annual budget?
95. Have you heard of the annual budget being called ‘consultative’?
96. (*Continued*) If YES – What do you think this word means?
97. Are there any comments you would like to make about any of the issues that have been discussed?

Appendix C: List of interview participants

S/C denotes sub-county

Date	Location	Interview number and interviewee job title
29/01/2016	Kampala	1. Senior Economist, PAD – MoFPED
03/02/2016	Pallisa	2. District Community Development Officer 3. Senior Finance Officer 4. District Health Officer 5. District Planner 6. Chief Administration Officer
04/02/2016	Pallisa	7. District Education Officer 8. Principal HR Officer 9. District Agricultural Extension Officer 10. District Production Officer
05/02/2016	Kampala	11. Senior Economist, Fiscal Decentralisation Section, BPED – MoFPED 12. Economist, Fiscal Decentralisation Section, BPED – MoFPED
08/02/2016	Kampala	13. Senior Economist, PAD – MoFPED 14. Principal Economist, Fiscal Decentralisation Section, BPED – MoFPED 15. Economist, PAD – MoFPED
10/02/2016	Lira	16. Deputy Chief Administration Officer 17. District Education Officer, and Assistant District Education Officer
11/02/2016	Lira	18. Assistant District Health Officer 19. Chief Financial Officer 20. Principal Human Resources Officer 21. District Production Officer
12/02/2016	Lira	22. District Planner
15/02/2016	Kampala	23. Principal Economist, PAD - MoFPED
05/04/2016	Kampala	24. Assistant Commissioner, PAD – MoFPED 25. Senior Economist, ISSD – MoFPED
08/04/2016	Kampala	26. Senior Economist, ISSD – MoFPED 27. Commissioner, PAD – MoFPED
11/04/2016	Kampala	28. Economist, ISSD – MoFPED 29. Economist, BPED – MoFPED
18/04/2016	Pallisa	30. Deputy Chief Administration Officer
18/04/2016	Pallisa – Petete S/C – Kachocha Village	31. LC1 Chair
19/04/2016	Pallisa – Petete S/C – Kachocha Village	32. Village elders x2 (in absence of LC3 officials)

20/04/2016	Pallisa – Opwateta S/C headquarters	33. LC3 Chair
20/04/2016	Pallisa – Opwateta S/C – Ogulia village	34. LC1 Chair
21/04/2016	Pallisa	35. Resident District Commissioner 36. LC5 Chair 37. Chief Administration Officer 38. Attend LC5 Council's Budget Approval Meeting
21/04/2016	Pallisa – Opwateta S/C headquarters	39. LC3 Speaker
22/04/2016	Lira	40. Chief Administration Officer
22/04/2016	Lira – Ogur S/C headquarters	41. LC3 Chair
22/04/2016	Lira – Amach-Agila S/C headquarters	42. LC3 Speaker
22/04/2016	Lira – Amach-Agila S/C – Akwachkilo village	43. LC1 Chair
23/04/2016	Lira – Ogur S/C – Chanpeciki village	44. LC1 Chair
25/04/2016	Lira	45. LC5 Speaker 46. LC5 Vice-Chair
27/04/2016	Ntungamo	47. Chief Administrative Officer
28/04/2016	Ntungamo	48. Chief Financial Officer 49. District Principal Human Resources Officer 50. District Planner 51. District Education Officer, and District Inspector of Schools 52. District Health Officer 53. LC5 Chair
29/04/2016	Ntungamo – Ruhaama S/C headquarters	54. SCCDO 55. LC3 Chair plus school tour
29/04/2016	Ntungamo – Ruhaama S/C – Mushasha village	56. LC1 Chair
30/04/2016	Ntungamo – Nyabihoko S/C – Katooma village	57. LC1 Chair
02/05/2016	Kampala	58. Economist, Education Sector, ISSD – MoFPED
03/05/2016	Kampala	59. Senior Economist, PAD – MoFPED

04/05/2016	Kampala	60. Assistant Commissioner, ISSD – MoFPED 61. Principal Economist, ISSD – MoFPED
05/05/2016	Kampala	62. Economist, BPED – MoFPED
06/05/2016	Kampala	63. Assistant Commissioner, BPED – MoFPED 64. Assistant Commissioner, ISSD – MoFPED 65. Senior Economist – MoES 66. Senior Economist – MoPS
09/05/2016	Kampala	67. Assistant Commissioner, Health Services – MoH 68. Principal Economist, ISSD – MoFPED
10/05/2016	Kampala	69. Assistant Director – Local Government Finance Commission
11/05/2016	Kampala	70. Assistant Commissioner, Planning and Budgeting – MoES
13/05/2016	Kampala	71. Principal Economist – MoH 72. Senior Economist – MoPS
16/05/2016	Kampala	73. Senior Economist – MoLG and FINMAP
17/05/2016	Kampala	74. Senior Economist – OPM
18/05/2016	Kampala	75. Senior Economist – Uganda Local Government Association
20/05/2016	Kampala	76. Professor, Public Administration – Makerere University
23/05/2016	Kampala	77. Principal Economist – MoLG
25/05/2016	Kampala	78. Consultant Economist – Budget Strengthening Initiative/ Overseas Development Institute
26/05/2016	Kampala	79. Local Government Accountability project team – ACODE 80. Team Leader, Support to Public Service Delivery project – UNICEF
27/05/2016	Kampala	81. Principal Economist – World Bank

Appendix D: Full disaggregation of results from Household Survey

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Name of village	Kachocha	Ogulia	Chanpecicki	Akwachkoli	Mushasha	Katooma
Parish	Petete	Opwatete	Akano	Abongorwot	Katojo	Kiyaga
Sub-county	Petete	Opwatete	Ogur	Amach-Agila	Ruhaama	Nyabihoko
District	Pallisa	Pallisa	Lira	Lira	Ntungamo	Ntungamo
Region	East	East	North	North	South-west	South-west
Population size	50 households	50 households	70 households	60 households	~70 households	79 households
Distance from district headquarters	One hour drive (though close to sub-county HQ)	40 mins drive plus 10 min walk	90 mins drive, bad road, plus 10 mins walk	60 mins drive plus 20 mins walk	70 mins drive, muddy road	90 mins drive, muddy mountainous road

Construction materials of walls

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Bricks	17	18	15	15	7	6
Mud	1	0	0	0	1	0
Cement	0	0	3	0	1	5
Earth	0	0	0	3	0	0
Reeds	0	0	0	0	4	6
Dung	0	0	0	0	5	1

Construction materials of roof

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Iron	15	12	11	3	18	18
Grass/ Thatch	3	6	7	15	0	0

Construction materials of floor

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Cement	5	4	3	0	4	5
Ground/mud/earth	12	13	15	18	8	9
Sand	0	0	0	0	5	4
Tiles	0	0	0	0	1	0
Other response	1	1	0	0	0	0

Differences in the construction materials of the homes of respondents reflect differences in both naturally-available materials in the studied districts, and in the respective poverty levels of the studied districts. In Ntungamo district, in Uganda's wealthier south-west, homes of participants are more likely to be constructed using at least some artificial materials, such as cement and iron. In Lira and Pallisa, homes are constructed using materials that can be collected from the local natural environment, such as thatch. Particularly in Lira district, in Uganda's conflict-affected northern region, houses of participants are constructed using thatching for rooves, and the bare earth or mud for flooring.

Number of rooms in the main house, or huts in the household (as appropriate)

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
1 or 2	9	7	0	5	2	1
3 or 4	8	9	10	7	10	14
5=/+	0	1	8	6	6	2
Other response	1	1	0	0	0	1

Houses in Lira district tended to be in the form of multiple small huts gathered around a central courtyard, each belonging to one or two adult family members. Houses in Pallisa or Ntungamo tended to be a single building, with nearby smaller buildings used for bathrooms or storage. On average, the homes of participants in Ntungamo district were slightly larger than those of respondents in Pallisa district.

From the house, can you still see a road (that a car can pass on)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	9	9	8	3	14	11
No	2	3	9	14	4	7
Other response	7	6	1	1	0	0

Approximate distance from nearest public footpath

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
≤10m	5	11	14	12	12	7
11-50m	11	4	2	6	5	0
51-100m	0	1	1	0	0	2
100m+	2	2	1	0	0	9
N/R	0	0	0	0	1	0

The homes of participants in Lira district tended to be further from a road that would be passable by car, but nearer to a footpath, suggesting a greater use of foot transport or cycles in use in this area.

Can you see any nearby sources of water?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	5	10	1	0	1	0
No	12	8	17	18	17	17
Other response	1	0	0	0	0	1

Particularly in (arid) Lira and Ntungamo districts, the homes of survey participants did not have access to a visible source of water (a well, pump or borehole).

Can you see any sources of power (electric wires, solar panels)

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	0	3 Solar	3 Solar	0	5 Solar	1 Solar
No	17	15	15	18	13	16
Other response	1	0	0	0	0	1

Most homes of participants in the survey did not have access to electricity, and those that did have access to electricity had privately purchased a small household solar panel.

Is the respondent male or female?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Male	11	8	8	12	6	6
Female	6	10	10	6	12	11
No response	1	0	0	0	0	1

Research assistants were asked to interview the first person (aged over 18) whom they encountered upon entering a home or compound. Survey respondents were evenly distributed between male and female.

Section 1 – Information about the Household

Were you born in this district?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	17	18	16	17	16	16
No	1	0	2	1	2	2
Other response	0	0	0	0	0	0

If NO – When did you move here?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
≤30 years	0	0	0	0	1	1
>30 years	1	4	2	1	1	1
n/a	17	14	16	17	16	16

Most respondents had been born in the district in which they were a resident.

What is your age?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
18 to 30	6	4	2	3	3	7
31 to 40	2	7	3	3	2	1
41 to 50	2	3	3	4	5	4
51 to 60	1	3	6	5	5	2
61+	4	0	4	3	3	4
Other response	3	1	0	0	0	0

How many people live in this household (<u>including</u> children at boarding school, or people working away from home)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
1 to 4	5	1	3	4	4	10
5 to 8	4	8	5	10	10	5
9+	9	9	5	4	4	3

(Continued) How many are adults (over 18)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
1 to 2	8	8	9	9	9	16
3 to 4	6	6	5	7	7	2
4+	4	4	4	2	2	0

(Continued) How many are children (17 and under)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Zero	4	0	2	0	0	2
1 to 3	3	3	6	9	8	9
4 to 6	5	8	8	6	8	4
6+	6	6	2	5	2	2
Other response	0	1	0	0	0	1

Households of respondents in Pallisa district were on average larger than those of respondents in Lira or Ntungamo districts. Households of participants in Village 6 (Ntungamo district) tended to be smaller than those of respondents in other villages.

What is the main type of employment of the adults who live in this household?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Agric	16	18	18	18	18	16
Health/Education	2	0	1	0	0	0
More than one	0	2	2	0	0	0
Another	0	0	0	0	0	1 Boda-boda
None	0	0	0	0	0	1

Most respondents in all sites were engaged in agriculture as their primary source of employment.

Which ethnic tribe are you from?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

Dominant group	17	18	18	18	16	17
Other group	1	0	0	0	2	1

Most respondents in each site were from the same tribal group as one another. This group differed from one site to another:

V1 – Bagwere

V2 – Bateso

V3 – Lango

V4 – Lango

V5 – Banyankole

V6 – Banyankole

Noting that Pallisa district's respondents came from two groups, located at the two sites. That is, despite the reasonably small size of Pallisa district, the residents of the two studied villages were concentrated in different language groups.

Which is your religion?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Christian traditional	17	13	17	12	15	13
Christian evangelical	0	3	1	6	3	5
Muslim	1	2	0	0	0	0

What is the highest level of education you have reached?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
None	2	3	1	1	3	4
Primary 1-3	3	3	7	5	5	0
Primary 4-7	6	11	5	8	6	11
Secondary	4	1	3	4	3	3
Tertiary	3	0	2	0	1	0

How long have you lived in this household?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
0-10 years	3	4	2	3	2	6
11-20 years	1	4	1	4	9	4
21-30 years	2	3	9	3	3	3
30+ years	8	6	6	6	4	4
Other response	4	1	0	1	0	1

Did you build this house [the main house], or was it already built?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
I built it	13	17	18	16	16	14
Relative	5	1	0	2	1	1
I rent it	0	0	0	0	1	2
Someone else	0	0	0	0	0	1

(Continued) If you built it yourself – Did anyone assist you to build it?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
No	12	15	8	6	5	9
Yes, spouse	0	1	9	8	8	6
Yes, relative	4	1	0	3	0	1
Yes, other	0	0	0	0	3	0
n/a	2	1	1	1	2	1

Which of these do you have in this household: Electricity Television Stove/cooker Refrigerator Livestock – cow(s) Livestock – goat(s) Livestock – chicken(s) Mattress Water pipe Cell phone Kerosene lanterns or other lights

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Electricity	0	0	0	0	4	1
Stove/cooker	0	1	4	5	6	0
Cow(s)	4	8	11	8	4	5

Chicken(s)	14	14	15	14	8	6
Water pipe	0	0	1	1	5	0
Lanterns	11	11	13	9	10	18
Television	0	0	0	0	2	1
Refrigerator	0	0	0	0	1	0
Goat(s)	8	13	12	11	11	10
Mattress	16	17	16	14	15	17
Cell phone	8	12	11	12	15	15
None of these	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	0	Pigs	0	Pig	0

Many of the surveyed households keep livestock as a source of food, and a store of wealth. Cattle are more commonly kept in Lira than in the two other districts. Cell phones are more commonly reported in Ntungamo district, in reflection of the lower poverty levels in this region, and potentially referencing the greater share of households engaged in commercial agriculture.

Have you owned this in the past, but have had to sell it: Electricity Television Stove/cooker Refrigerator Livestock – cow(s) Livestock – goat(s) Livestock – chicken(s) Mattress Water pipe Cell phone Kerosene lanterns or other lights

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Stove/cooker	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cow(s)	12	10	7	5	8	13
Chicken(s)	15	10	3	5	5	13
Lanterns	1	0	0	0	1	0
Television	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refrigerator	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goat(s)	12	9	4	4	13	14
Mattress	1	1	0	0	1	0
Cell phone	4	1	0	0	2	3
None of these	1	1	9	12	3	3
Other response	0	0	1	0	0	0

Responses to this question illustrate the tradability of livestock, reflecting their use as a store of value. In the absence of formal banking services, livestock assets can be liquidated at times of hardship in order to provide a financial resource. The higher number of respondents who reported this outcome from Ntungamo perhaps reflects the higher level of economic activity in the south-west.

Section 2 – Information about the Village

What is the biggest source of income for people in this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Agriculture	18	17	18	18	18	18
More than one	0	1	0	0	0	0

What is the main religion of this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Christian-traditional	17	16	12	10	18	18
Christian-evangelical	0	0	0	2	0	0
Another Christian	0	0	0	3	0	0
A mix of religions	0	0	6	3	0	0
Other response	1	2	0	0	0	0

What is the main tribal group in this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Dominant	17	18	18	17	18	18
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other response	1	0	0	1	0	0

Do you think there are any poor households in this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	15	16	18	18	17	15
No	2	2	0	0	1	0
I don't know	1	0	0	0	0	3

While the majority of research participants answered that they do believe there are poor households in their village, the universal affirmative answer to this question in the two villages in Lira points to the higher level of poverty in the northern regions of Uganda.

In your opinion, how do you know which households are poor?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Absence of:						
-Land / Tools	7	6	4	7	6	8
- Housing	9	6	3	2	10	4
- Clothing	4	5	2	1	0	1
- Education / Fees	5	4	5	8	2	1
- Food	7	10	7	11	8	5
- Livestock	3	4	4	7	4	3
- Health	4	3	1	3	0	0
- Income	5	6	5	9	7	6
- Water	0	1	0	2	0	0
- Transport	0	0	1	2	0	0
- Radio	0	0	0	1	0	0
Widows / orphans	1	1	5	2	1	1
Disabled / ill / elderly	0	0	3	0	1	0

Other response	0	0	0	0	1	3

Responses to this question reflect the importance of a household's social and economic context in determining the poverty level of its inhabitants. Households containing individuals whose personal circumstances will contribute to impoverishment, such as an illness, are known within their own community to be vulnerable to poverty. That is, attributes of individual household members determine the vulnerability of that household to poverty.

Across the three studied districts, commonalities are observed to some extent in the variables that suggest a risk of poverty for a particular household. In Lira district, in Uganda's conflict-affected northern region, households that are comprised of widows or orphans are thought to be especially disadvantaged, as well as those without an income, and this is reflected in problematically-low levels of access to food. In Village 5 in Ntungamo district, and in Village 1 in Pallisa district, poor-quality housing is thought by respondents to be an especially powerful indicator of poverty. For respondents in all three districts, a lack of access to food as an indicator of a household experiencing poverty. A lack of access to land or farming tools is also nominated by around one-third of respondents across all sites as indicating a risk of impoverishment for households.

Section 3 – Deciding on Development Priorities

What do you think are the most important development priorities for this district?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Roads	7	9	7	6	3	2
Schools	10	11	6	11	3	2
Healthcare	9	10	10	10	7	5
Agriculture	5	4	9	7	9	8
Livestock	1	1	2	1	2	2
Water	3	6	4	5	0	1
Electricity	0	1	1	0	1	0
Governance	0	1	0	0	0	0
Credit/Savings	0	1	0	0	0	1

Income generation	0	1	2	2	0	4
IDK	1	0	1	0	1	0

Respondents in Pallisa and Lira Districts reported that their greatest development priorities for their districts related to public services and amenities, in particular roads, water supply, schools and healthcare, with at least half of the respondents in each district nominating these as priorities. In contrast, respondents in the two villages in Ntungamo District were less likely to nominate these as priorities. For respondents in Ntungamo, the development of agriculture is the most important development priority for their district, with half of the respondents in each village in Ntungamo nominating this as a priority. Income-generating activities were also nominated as a priority by respondents in Village 6 in Ntungamo District, where there was visible evidence of cash-crops being grown (such as coffee), suggesting that some residents of this village have been able to move beyond subsistence agriculture and into commercial farming.

These findings accord with the comparative levels of development in these locations, with Ntungamo located within Uganda's better-developed and more-prosperous south-western region, while Pallisa and Lira are located in the less-developed eastern and northern regions.

How are the development priorities chosen for this district?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
The people decide	1	4	7	9	10	5
District	13	12	15	10	9	8
National govt	7	9	9	13	7	9
People and govt	1	4	0	3	2	0
Another	2	4	2	3	4	0
None of these	0	0	0	0	0	0

village council	3	2	9	6	7	1
I don't know	2	3	0	0	0	0

Responses to this question suggest a mixed set of impressions and opinions on who is responsible for identifying development priorities for the district. In Village 1 and 2, in Pallisa, most respondents were of the view that either the district or the national government determines the district's development priorities.

Respondents in Lira District were also of the view that the people themselves are able to contribute to identifying the development priorities of the district. However, residents of Lira District were also likely to nominate the national government as the source of district development priorities. This is perhaps a reflection of the leadership by the national government of post-war reconstruction efforts in northern Uganda. Programs such as the PRDP are driven by the national government, rather than being fully decentralised to district-level governments, and this perhaps influences the opinion of villagers that this is the source of the development priorities of the district.

In Village 5, in Ntungamo District, respondents suggested a stronger role for the village council, with 7/18 respondents nominating this level as having a role in determining local development priorities; 10/18 also suggested that the community itself plays a role. On the other hand, respondents in Village 6 (also in Ntungamo District) echoed the perspectives of respondents in Pallisa, in suggesting that the district and national governments have the most important roles in determining district development priorities. These outcomes suggest that while the village council in Village 5 may play an important and active role in development planning, that is not the case in Village 6, where the organisation level and skill of the village council may be lower.

Relatively few respondents (10/108) nominated cooperation between the community and government as being the source of development priorities for the district, even though this scenario is the closest reflection of the purported officially-sanctioned prioritisation process. While the official bottom-up planning process suggests that communities and councils together determine development priorities, particularly at the village level, this is not reflected in the answers given by survey respondents.

Do you attend village meetings to decide on the development priorities for the village for the next year?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, every time	4	1	10	5	10	6
Yes, sometimes	2	5	4	5	6	7
No, Not invited	6	4	0	3	1	3
No, no meeting held	3	3	2	4	0	1
No, [nothing added]	2	1	2	1	0	0
No, Too busy	1	0	0	0	0	0
No, Too old	0	0	0	0	0	1
No, Not paid	0	1	0	0	0	0
IDK	0	3	0	0	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	6	6	14	10	16	13
No	12	9	4	8	1	5
Other response	0	3	0	0	1	0

Respondents in Pallisa district suggested that they are not likely to attend the village meeting, with 21/36 respondents answering that they do not attend. For some, this is because they are not invited to the meeting, suggesting that rather than being an open and village-wide meeting, village meetings are instead only open to selected individuals in the studied communities. This suggests that the resolutions and priorities that are determined within these meetings may not be fully representative of the entire community.

Respondents in Lira District and Ntungamo were more likely to report that they attend the village meeting, particularly in Village 5. According to the responses to the previous

question, the village council of Village 5 is potentially a more effective and active local government than in other locations.

Do most people in the village participate in the meetings about the district's priorities?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, Discuss issues	3	2	8	8	5	4
Yes, Gain a benefit	0	0	0	0	2	2
Yes, [nothing added]	0	1	0	0	8	6
TSE, Gain a benefit	0	0	0	1	0	0
TSE, Meetings sporadic	1	2	1	0	0	0
TSE, Only some are invited	0	0	3	3	0	0
TSE, Too busy	2	0	1	0	0	0
TSE, No interest	0	2	1	0	0	0
TSE, [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	0
No, Not informed	3	0	1	1	0	0
No, No meeting held	4	4	3	3	0	1
No, Not interested	1	0	0	0	1	2
NR	1	2	0	0	0	0

IDK	3	6	0	0	1	3

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	3	3	8	8	15	12
To some extent	3	4	6	4	1	0
No	8	4	4	4	1	3
Other response	4	7	0	2	1	3

Across the three studied districts, responses to this question were variable. In Pallisa District, respondents were of the view that other villagers did not regularly attend local planning meetings, or the respondent was unsure of whether this was the case. Respondents in Lira District were divided amongst those who perceive that the village does attend, and those who do not. In Ntungamo, and particularly in Village 5, respondents tended to answer that most people in the village do participate in planning meetings.

Who arranges these village meetings?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
LC1 Chair	5	9	15	11	18	16
Another person	3	2	6	9	2	2
Other response	11	8	3	8	0	1

Who speaks at village meetings?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
LC1	7	10	13	9	16	13
Other official	2	3	5	3	1	1
Another	0	0	2	3	3	1
Members	7	10	8	5	7	7

Other response	11	8	4	8	2	4

In Pallisa, respondents to this question suggest that the members of the village and the LC1 Chair each speak in village meetings. In Lira and especially in Ntungamo, respondents were more likely to respond that the LC1 Chair or another official speak in meetings, with fewer respondents answering that members of the community also speak in meetings.

The high number of 'other' responses to this question reflects the high proportion of respondents who said they did not regularly attend village meetings, and thus answered 'N/A' to this question (and forthcoming questions relating to village development meetings).

What issues are decided at village meetings?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Development issues	3	4	6	2	6	3
Education	3	1	4	0	0	0
Healthcare	2	3	3	2	4	4
Security	3	1	1	0	1	7
Agriculture	1	2	4	3	8	6
Income generation	1	0	0	2	4	5
Food security	1	0	0	0	0	0
Conflict resolution	0	2	5	3	1	2
Water	0	2	5	5	5	2
Roads	0	1	2	2	3	0
Other response	11	8	1	8	2	3

In Ntungamo, the most commonly-discussed topics relate to income generation and agriculture. This is reflective of the higher importance of income-generating agriculture

in this location, with commercial farming being undertaken at the studied sites (rather than only subsistence agriculture). This is in accordance with south-western Uganda's higher level of agricultural and economic development. This result is also reflective of respondents' answer to Q 21, in which respondents were asked for their opinion on the most important development priorities for the village: respondents in these two sites also answered that agriculture and income generation were their principal priorities. Taken together, these two results suggest that the development priorities that are articulated by the villagers in these sites are also reflected in the issues that are discussed at the village-planning level.

Respondents in Pallisa were more likely to suggest that the main topics discussed in village meetings are more general, relating to development overall, and education provision. When compared to the results of Q21, in which respondents nominated roads, healthcare, and agriculture as the development priorities of the district (in addition to education), this response suggests that the village planning meetings are not felt to be addressing the community's own development priorities.

The greater emphasis in Lira District on conflict resolution points to the recent conflict history of northern Uganda, and also suggests that efforts to reduce local conflict have been decentralised to the village level.

How much time in advance before a village meeting do you receive notice of it?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
1 day	0	0	3	0	2	1
1 day - 1 week	0	0	4	2	5	0
1 week	3	3	9	6	7	9
1 week - 1 month	1	4	1	2	2	2
1 month	2	0	0	0	0	2
1 month +	1	1	0	0	0	0
No notice	0	1	0	1	0	0
Other response	11	9	1	7	3	4

How often do village meetings occur?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Once per week	0	0	1	1	0	0
Twice per year	0	2	1	1	0	1
No regular schedule	5	4	4	4	3	1
Another	0	2	5	5	6	3
Once per month	2	1	5	1	8	9
Once per year	1	1	1	0	0	1
Other response	9	8	1	6	1	3

Overall, in your opinion, does the government address the development priorities from this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, Services exist	0	0	2	4	7	4
Yes, Nothing added	0	0	0	0	2	1
TSE, Some services exist	2	3	5	3	2	3
TSE, Inefficiencies/delays	2	5	0	0	1	0
TSE, Nothing added	1	0	0	0	2	1
No, Services are poor	8	8	5	3	1	1
No, Concerns unaddressed	0	0	3	5	2	5
No, Nothing added	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other response	4	2	3	3	1	3

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	0	0	2	4	9	5
TSE	5	8	5	3	5	4
No	9	8	8	8	3	6
Other response	4	2	3	3	1	3

Responses to this question suggest that respondents in the different studied sites had different levels of satisfaction with the service delivery and responsiveness offered by the government. (For the purposes of this question, 'government' was not defined according to a specific level; the respondent instead answered the question with their impression of the entire government structure.)

In Pallisa, around half of the respondents did not think that government was addressing the development needs of the village. In Village 2, some respondents answered that they did feel that government partly addressed the development needs of the village, but only partially, or with inefficiencies or delays.

In Lira, nearly half of the respondents in each village thought that government was addressing the development needs of the village, with other responses balanced between approval of government (answering 'Yes'), partial satisfaction (answering 'To some extent', with some services in existence) or uncertainty (answering 'I don't know').

In Ntungamo, responses were different between the two studied sites. In Village 5, where previous responses suggest that the village council is more active in local development planning and consultation, 14/18 respondents answered that they felt government was at least partially addressing local development needs (answering 'Yes' or 'To some extent'). However, in Village 6, responses were divided between full approval, partial approval, disapproval, and uncertainty. This suggests that respondents have had different experiences or hold different views on the extent of government success in addressing local development priorities in this location.

Section 4 – Services in the Village

What kinds of public services are there in this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

School(s)	18	18	9	5	17	17
Health centre(s)	6	4	1	7	9	16
Tarmac road(s)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murram road(s)	17	17	7	10	4	14
Bridge(s)	3	0	6	6	11	6
Water pump(s)	1	4	0	8	12	5
Public latrine(s)	1	1	2	0	0	0
Agric extension(s)	0	0	12	3	7	5
Another	1	3	0	0	0	1
None of these	0	0	0	5	0	0

Who provides these services?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
National gov	7	9	9	10	18	15
District gov	10	12	10	10	5	2
Village council	1	1	3	0	2	6
NGOs	3	2	12	5	4	0
Religious	0	0	0	0	8	1
Another	1	1	1	7	4	2
None	0	0	0	0	0	0
I don’t know	3	4	0	0	0	0

Across the three districts, respondents perceive that the public services that are available in their village are provided by a range of different levels of government. Consistently in Villages 2-6, at least half of the respondents answered that they believe

the national government to be responsible for service provision in their district. This rises to 15/18 in Village 6, and 18/18 in Village 15.

However, in Villages 1-4, respondents suggested that they also perceive a role for the district government in delivering public services at the village level. That is, in Villages 2-4, respondents perceive that the district and national governments together are responsible for service delivery.

Only in Village 6, in Ntungamo, did 1/3 of villagers perceive that the village council plays a role in providing services. In Village 5, in which previous responses had suggested that the village council plays an important role in service planning and identifying priorities, few respondents (2/18) then perceived that the village council has a role in service delivery. This may be because respondents are able to discern the distinction between planning for service delivery and then implementing or providing services.

The high responses in V3 (Lira District) reflects the recent post-conflict context in Lira, in which a large number of Ugandan and international NGOs have undertaken service provision in northern Uganda as part of a humanitarian response.

If you need to use a health service, do you have to pay fees (in cash)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	1	2	3	0	5	4
Yes, more	7	12	6	12	4	6
No, never	10	4	8	6	9	8
Other response	0	0	1	0	0	0

The answers given by respondents to this question were varied, even within one district, suggesting that respondents do not necessarily receive consistent treatment or management when they seek medical care. Almost the same number of respondents (45/108) answered that they do not ever have to pay a fee to access medical care, compared to 47/108 who answered that they have had to pay a fee on more than one occasion in order to access medical care.

(*Continued*) If NO, do you have to make a payment by contributing something, other than cash?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	2	0	2	2	0	0
No	10	6	7	3	9	8
n/a	6	12	8	11	9	9
I don't know	0	0	1	2	0	1

Have you ever had to miss medical treatment because the fees were too expensive?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	0	3	2	1	3	7
Yes, more	8	10	5	13	7	10
No	10	4	11	4	8	1
I don't know	0	1	0	0	0	0

Responses to this question suggest that when respondents are required to pay fees for medical treatment (as described in Q33), these fees are problematically expensive, and represent a barrier to accessing medical care.

(*Continued*) Has anyone else in this household had to miss medical treatment because the fees were too expensive?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	0	4	4	0	3	5
Yes, more	8	10	3	11	7	10
No, never	10	4	11	6	8	1
I don't know	0	0	0	1	0	2

Continuing from Q35, responses to this question suggest that medical fees have had a detrimental effect on the ability of the respondent on their relative(s) in accessing

medical care. However, because fees are not applied consistently (as highlighted in Q33), these barriers to medical care are not universally encountered.

Has there ever been a time you needed a medicine, but there was no stock / supplies?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	7	6	3	1	4	4
Yes, more	10	10	15	16	11	11
No, never	1	1	0	1	3	3
I don't know	0	1	0	0	0	0

Responses to this question suggest that medical stock-outs are a consistent problem across each of the studied sites.

If YES (there was a stock-out) – what do you do?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Assistance – leader	1	1	0	2	0	0
Assistance - relative	4	1	4	1	0	0
Get at another facility	11	11	16	14	14	15
Did nothing / not get	2	2	1	3	2	1
Different medicine	6	0	0	0	0	1
Used local herbs	2	1	0	1	0	0
Other response	2	6	1	1	3	2

Answers to this question suggest that where there are medical stock-outs, respondents must undertake the additional expense and effort of obtaining supplies elsewhere.

Have you ever made a complaint about a service that was not provided, or that was poor quality?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, once	2	3	0	0	2	0
Yes, more	3	10	4	2	3	3
No, never	13	5	14	16	11	14
No response	0	0	0	0	2	1

A majority of respondents in Villages 1 and 3-6 suggested that they have not undertaken a formal complaint about service delivery quality or absences. Only in Village 2, in Pallisa, did a small majority of respondents (10/18) answer that they have done so on more than one occasion.

If YES – who did you speak to?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
LC1 chair	5	13	3	1	2	0
Parish official	0	4	0	0	1	0
LC3 official	4	10	3	1	1	1
LC5 official	0	5	0	1	3	1
National official	0	2	0	0	1	1
Someone else	3	5	4	0	1	2
n/a	9	1	14	16	13	15

The respondents in Village 2 (Pallisa) who answered that they had complained about the poor quality or absence of services in their village then answered that they had directed their complaints to both the LC1 Chair and an LC3 official. For some

respondents (5/18) the complaint was elevated further, to the LC5 (district) level. The practice of reporting a complaint to more than one person suggests that the initial complaint, presumably to the LC1 Chair, was not resolved, with the result that the complainant escalated their complaint to the LC3 or LC5 levels.

If YES – what was the result of your complaint?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Resolved	0	0	0	0	1	0
Partly resolved	2	3	0	1	1	0
Not resolved	6	12	4	1	3	3
n/a	9	1	14	16	13	15
IDK	1	2	0	0	0	0

The majority of respondents in Village 2 who had complained about a service reported that their complaint was not addressed.
Only one respondent across all villages (1/108), in Village 5 (Ntungamo), reported that they felt their complaint had been fully addressed.

Do all of the children in this household attend school?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
All	3	4	8	5	12	8
Some	11	13	9	9	5	6
None	0	1	0	3	1	3
n/a	4	0	1	1	0	1

If YES: what type of school is it?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Gov-Day	12	12	14	13	14	6
Gov-Boarding	0	0	5	3	3	1
Priv-Day	4	4	4	3	3	9

Priv-Boarding	1	2	6	1	0	2
Religious	0	0	1	0	0	0
n/a	4	1	1	4	1	4

If not all of your children attend school, why is this?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Too expensive	2	0	2	5	0	1
Too young	9	14	7	7	2	6
Too old	1	0	0	0	0	0
Work	0	0	0	0	1	0
They are ill	0	0	0	0	1	0
n/a	7	3	9	6	13	11

Do you have to pay school fees (in cash)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	8	10	15	13	17	14
No	6	7	2	1	0	0
n/a	4	1	1	4	1	4

Across the six studied sites, respondents reported being required to pay school fees for their children. However, in Village 1 and Village 2 (Pallisa), this was reported more frequently than in other locations.

(*Continued*) If NO, do you have to make a payment by contributing something, such as supplies or paint?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	3	4	3	4	1	0
No	4	6	4	1	6	1
n/a	11	8	11	13	11	17

Is it hard to find money for school fees?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, always	10	13	13	14	9	8
Yes, sometimes	2	2	3	0	5	2
No	1	1	1	0	3	4
n/a	5	2	1	4	1	4

Respondents across all six of the studied sites reported that it is difficult to afford to pay ('find money for') school fees. However, this answer was less commonly reported in Villages 5 and 6 (Ntungamo District). In these locations, a small number of respondents (7/36) reported that it is never difficult to afford school fees, and a further 7/36 reported that it is only sometimes difficult to afford school fees. These results are perhaps a reflection of the greater level of economic activity in Ntungamo District, located in south-western Uganda, such as through commercial farming.

What do you do if you cannot find money for the fees?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Remove children from school	9	4	3	10	2	1
Do extra labour/agric	1	9	2	2	4	4
Ask for extension	2	1	5	2	6	3
Borrow money	1	1	6	1	1	2
Sell an asset	1	1	2	2	1	1
n/a	4	0	1	4	4	8
IDK	0	2	0	0	0	0

Respondents to this question reported a range of different strategies to manage challenges that arise in being able to afford school fees for their children. For some, particularly in Village 1 and Village 4, children are removed from school until school

fees can be paid. Others undertake additional labour, or produce an agricultural surplus that is then sold in order to raise money for fees. For still others, strategies involve either the acquisition of debt or the liquidation of an asset, suggesting that parents are willing to undertake financial hardship in order to ensure that their children are able to attend school. However, if the quality of the education that is then provided is of a low standard, a family may arguably be made worse-off by the children attending school, if challenging financial circumstances are entered into but the education received in return is poor.

Responses to this question revealed different approaches undertaken in different villages. In Villages 1 and 4, the most common strategy undertaken was to remove children from school until fees could be paid (this strategy has been adopted by half of the respondents in each village at some stage). In Village 2, extra labour or agricultural production is the most common strategy. For those in Village 3, respondents most often seek to borrow money, or request an extension of the school. Requesting an extension was the most common strategy in Village 5 also, while in Village 6, respondents were more likely to respond that they are not often troubled by the need to raise money for school fees. For those who are, the main strategy involved was to undertake additional labour or agricultural production. These responses in Village 6 reflect the higher level of economic activity in place in this village (in Ntungamo District), with respondents able to use commercial farming to increase their access to the cash needed for payments of school fees.

Have any of your children ever missed school for more than one week?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	9	12	8	12	8	7
No	4	6	9	2	9	7
n/a	5	0	1	4	1	4

(*Continued*) If YES: why was this?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Child was ill	8	9	4	2	3	6
Fees not paid	6	6	4	12	5	4

Teacher not attended	2	3	0	0	1	0
n/a	9	5	10	6	10	11

The responses to questions 48, 49 and 50 suggest that in some locations, and in Village 4 (Lira District) in particular, school fees are difficult to afford; when fees cannot be paid, the child is removed from school; and that this outcome has occurred, and has caused children to miss more than one week of school on at least one occasion. The higher number of respondents who reported these outcomes from Village 4 suggests that holding cash on hand is a particular problem in this location, perhaps suggesting an elevated level of poverty. The lower proportion of respondents who reported these outcomes in Village 5 and Village 6 suggest that higher levels of commercial-agriculture activity in these locations has had a positive impact on parents' access to cash, and thus on children's attendance at school.

Do you know the head teacher of your children's school?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	11	17	12	12	15	10
No	3	1	5	2	2	4
n/a	4	0	1	4	1	4

Are you a member of the Parent-Teacher Association of the school?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	2	0	7	3	4	5
No, [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	2	2
Not invited/elected	5	13	8	6	2	2
Not educated	2	4	0	0	1	0
Too busy	0	0	0	2	0	0
Not a parent	0	1	0	0	1	0
Boarding school	0	0	0	0	0	2

Too ill/elderly	3	0	2	0	0	0
Not interested	1	0	0	3	0	1
There is no PTA	0	0	0	0	2	2
n/a (no children)	5	0	1	4	1	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	2	0	7	3	4	5
No	11	18	10	11	11	7
Other response	5	0	1	4	3	6

Respondents to this question in Villages 1-4 (Pallisa and Lira districts) report that they may not be participants in the PTA of their children's school if they are not invited to join, or are not sufficiently educated. These responses suggest that rather than being an open forum for the management of school issues, the PTA is viewed in some locations as a selective institution. In Ntungamo District the responses were more evenly divided amongst parents who are members of the PTA and those who are not, suggesting a higher level of participation in this institution.

Has there ever been a time when the teacher was absent for more than one week?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	4	5	4	4	4	2
No	3	3	10	6	8	10
n/a	4	0	1	4	1	4
IDK	7	10	3	4	5	2

(*Continued*) If YES: Why was this?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Teacher ill	6	7	1	0	2	1
Teacher travelled	2	4	1	0	0	0

Teacher working	1	0	0	0	1	0
Teacher vacancy	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other response	0	3	3	4	2	2
n/a	11	7	14	14	14	16
I don't know	1	2	0	0	1	0

If your children reached their school and the teacher has not attended for the day, what do you do?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
I do nothing	3	2	4	3	4	2
Talk to headteacher	7	10	9	8	5	5
Children go to another class	0	0	0	0	4	2
Children come home	1	3	0	1	1	0
I would not find out	0	0	3	2	0	2
n/a	4	0	3	4	3	6
I don't know	3	3	1	0	1	2

Section 5 – Community Leaders

Do you know the name of the LC5 (District) Chief?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	14	15	13	17	14	14
No	1	0	4	1	3	4
IDK	3	3	1	0	1	0

Have you ever met the LC5 (District) Chief or any of the LC5 (District) Councillors?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

Yes, LC5 chief	0	1	3	5	6	1
Yes, LC5 Councillor	11	3	4	0	2	0
Yes, both	3	5	2	8	4	6
No, neither	4	9	9	5	6	11

Responses to questions 56 and 57 suggest that while respondents are in general familiar with the name of the LC5 Chair (implying that they may have voted for them), they were less likely to have met them. Only in Village 4 (in Lira District) had a majority of respondents reported that they had meet the LC5 Chief. In Village 5 (in Ntungamo), as many respondents had met the LC5 Chief as had not. In three villages (Villages 2, 3 and 6) the majority of respondents reported that they had not met any members of the LC5 Council.

Do you know the name of at least one of the National Members of Parliament for this area?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	16	13	15	18	15	16
No	0	3	1	0	2	2
IDK	1	2	2	0	0	0
NR	1	0	0	0	1	0

Have any of the National Members of Parliament ever visited this area?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	11	8	16	13	11	13
No	7	9	2	4	7	4
IDK	0	1	0	0	0	0
NR	0	0	0	1	0	1

Have you ever met any of the National Members of Parliament?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	6	4	12	8	8	7

No	11	11	5	10	9	11
NR	1	3	1	0	1	0

If YES: in what circumstances?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
During campaigns	3	5	11	6	0	2
To discuss needs	6	2	1	1	1	0
Providing a good	0	0	0	1	0	0
Village meeting	0	1	3	0	6	5
Coincidentally	0	1	0	0	1	1
n/a	8	6	6	10	10	11
IDK	1	4	0	0	0	0

Are any of the National Members of Parliament for this area from the same ethnic tribe as you?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	11	11	18	18	16	17
No	6	6	0	0	1	1
IDK	1	1	0	0	1	0

Responses to this question suggest that in each of the studied sites, national MPs for the area are the same ethnicity as the respondents, pointing to a degree of correlation between electoral boundaries and tribal groups. Only in Pallisa District, where leaders have suggested sub-dividing the district due to tensions between the region's tribal groups, were responses more mixed between those who are and those who are not of the same tribal group as the national MP.

Is it important to you that the National Members of Parliament for this area are from the same ethnic tribe as you?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Better communication	6	11	4	8	10	8
Yes – Better representation	4	7	7	6	3	2
Yes - nothing added	0	0	0	0	3	0
No - service more important	6	2	7	4	0	2
No - tribes work together	1	0	0	0	0	7
No - Nothing added	0	0	0	0	1	0
IDK	1	1	0	0	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	10	18*	11	14	16	10
No	7	2	7	4	1	9
IDK	1	1	0	0	1	0

**Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18*

The responses given by survey participants in response to this question varied from location to location. For most respondents, other than in Village 3, being from the same ethnic tribe is important because it makes communication easier (including in a common language).

For respondents in Village 3, it is more important to be from the same tribal group as the local MP because it improves representation, and suggests that the tribe's needs will be better represented in parliament than would be the case if the MP was from a different tribe. However, for just as many respondents in Village 3, and for some respondents in Village 1, it is more important to respondents that their local MP represent their interests successfully, rather than being from the same tribe.

In Village 6 (Ntungamo), respondents were evenly divided between wanting their MP to be from the same tribe as them because this eases communication, and being of the view that people from all tribes can work together successfully. Respondents from Village 6 were virtually the only respondents to put forward this view. Given that Ntungamo is located in south-western Uganda, the region that tends to dominate in senior parliamentary appointments, respondents may be seeking to argue that the national parliament represents all tribes equally, rather than favouring their community and region. However, this viewpoint was not shared by respondents in Village 5, who argued that it was important for MPs to be from their same tribe in order to facilitate better communication, and to a lesser extent, greater representation.

Are any of the members of the LC5 (District Council) for this area from the same ethnic tribe as you?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	12	11	16	18	16	17
No	6	6	1	0	1	1
IDK	0	1	1	0	1	0

Similarly to question 62, respondents here agreed that most members of the LC5 Council are from the same tribe as themselves. In Villages 1 and 2, the two villages in Pallisa district, one third of the respondents felt that LC5 Council members are not from the same tribe as themselves, in reflection of the greater tribal heterogeneity in Pallisa District (at the time of the survey; Pallisa has since been sub-divided into two districts, potentially dividing tribal groups into different districts).

Is it important to you that members of the LC5 (District Council) for this area are from the same ethnic tribe as you?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Easy communication	5	8	5	4	8	8
Yes - Better representation	5	4	5	10	3	1

Yes - nothing added	0	0	0	0	5	1
No - Service more important	4	2	8	3	0	3
No - Tribes work together	2	1	0	1	1	2
No - nothing added	1	0	0	0	1	5
IDK	1	3	0	0	0	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	10	12	10	14	16	10*
No	7	3	8	4	2	10
IDK	1	3	0	0	0	0

**Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18*

Responses to this question varied in different locations. In Villages 2, 5 and 6, a majority of respondents argued that they feel it is important for their elected leaders on the LC5 Council to be from the same tribe as themselves, in order to make communication easier (including in a common language). For respondents in Village 4, being from the same tribe as LC5 Council members results in better representation. In Village 3, also in Lira District, respondents did not feel that it was important for LC5 Council members to be from their same tribe (although responses to question 64 suggests that in fact, they are likely to be), because the performance and service of Council members was more important. In Village 1, in Pallisa, respondents were divided amongst responses suggesting that being from the same tribe as an LC5 Councillor leads to better communication, or better presentation, and responses suggesting that service was more important than tribal similarity. The more heterogenous tribal balance within the population of Pallisa District is perhaps reflected in this response, where respondents have in fact had the experience of being represented at the LC5 Council level by representatives from other tribes, and so have mixed opinions of this experience.

Did any of the election candidates visit this village before the election?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	14	14	18	17	18	18
No	3	2	0	0	0	0
NR	1	2	0	1	0	0

(*Continued*) If YES: Which level of government were they seeking to be elected to?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
National parlt	14	15	18	17	14	18
District council	14	15	18	15	16	18
President	1	6	4	0	6	6
Sub-C council	15	17	18	12	16	18
n/a	1	0	0	0	0	0
IDK	0	1	0	0	0	0

(*Continued*) If YES: Did they promise that they would bring anything to the village if they were elected?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes, namely:						
Electricity	3	0	0	2	8	7
Services (general)	5	2	2	5	2	2
Agriculture	1	0	5	7	1	1
Water	1	6	3	6	3	7
Roads	4	8	7	7	5	5
School	3	4	2	11	3	0
Healthcare	3	9	2	5	1	4
District/sub-county	4	2	0	0	0	0

“Yes”	0	0	1	0	6	6
No	0	0	0	0	0	0
n/a	1	0	0	0	0	0
IDK	0	1	5	1	0	0

This question reveals that electoral candidates promise to communities that they will bring specific new amenities to specific locations, depending on the major concerns of voters in these locations. In Pallisa, candidates suggested they would deliver a new district, as well as improved services such as education and healthcare. In Lira, candidates focus on agriculture, water and roads. In Ntungamo, where households are engaged in commercial farming to a greater degree than in other locations in Uganda, candidates commit to providing electricity services, and to improving roads.

(*Continued*) If YES: Do you expect that they will deliver these things?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	1	2	0	4	6	2
To some extent	2	4	2	4	2	2
No	6	8	10	4	4	4
n/a	1	0	3	1	0	0
IDK	8	4	3	5	6	10

However, responses to this question suggest that survey respondents are wary of election candidates’ ability or genuine intention to deliver the changes they promise, with a majority of respondents answering that they do not think, or do not know whether, candidates will deliver on their commitments.

In your opinion, why have there been no LC1 and LC2 elections since 2001?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Too expensive	1	2	5	3	1	0
No interest	1	2	0	0	0	0

Govt doesn't want	5	5	3	5	0	0
There have been	0	0	2	1	3	5
Another	1	5	3	3	3	1
IDK	10	8	7	8	11	14

Do you know (on a personal level) anyone who works in the central government or the national bureaucracy (in Kampala)?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	2	4	1	0	12	7
No	12	13	14	18	6	7
IDK	4	1	3	0	0	4

Responses to this question highlight the greater political and economic connectivity to Kampala that is held by residents of the south-west of Uganda. Respondents in Village 6 and in particular Village 5 are much more likely to be personally familiar with someone who is employed in the central government or national-level bureaucracy than respondents from other districts. Respondents in Villages 3 and 4 (Lira District) were the least likely to be personally familiar with such a person, reflecting the relative political and economic disadvantage of northern Uganda.

Who do you think are the most powerful people in this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
LC1 Chair	9*	11	16	18	14	11
Business leaders	1	1	4	5	0	4
Religious leaders	1	4	9	15	5	7
Police officers	7	7	9	13	5	6
Teachers	2	2	8	14	7	7

Medical workers	1	3	6	15	7	6
Other civil servants	1	2	3	6	1	4
Other	0	1	6	9	0	1
IDK	7	6	0	0	0	0

**Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18*

Responses to this question suggest that according to the participants in the survey, different individuals are thought to be in powerful positions in villages. For those in Pallisa district (Villages 1 and 2), around half of the respondents in each village suggested that the LC1 Chair and police officers are in powerful positions. Police officers and (near-unanimously) the LC1 Chair were also nominated in Villages 3 and 4 in Lira District, along with religious leaders and teachers. In Villages 5 and 6 in Ntungamo, while LC1 Chairs were also thought to be powerful in the village context, police officers had less support. Teachers were instead nominated as powerful figures, along with medical workers and religious leaders, to a lesser extent.

(*Continued*) What makes them powerful?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Job is important	9	7	15	17	14	16
Wealthy	5	0	2	1	9	5
Political connections	0	0	4	3	2	0
Tribal connections	0	0	0	0	1	0
Another	4	7	8	11	2	4
IDK	5	6	0	0	0	0
NR	2	0	0	0	0	0

Do any religious groups or NGOs provide any services in this village?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

Yes, they are:						
Religious	0	1	0	2	3	0
International	2	2	10	1	2	0
Domestic	0	0	1	1	0	2
Doesn't name	0	0	1	2	1	0
Names sector	1	0	0	0	0	0
[nothing added]	0	0	2	0	2	2
No	13	13	2	12	8	11
IDK	2	1	2	0	2	3
NR	0	1	0	0	0	0

(*Continued*) If YES: Do you use these services?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	3	2	7	3	8	2
No, because:						
Not selected	0	0	8	1	0	2
Another reason	8	11	1	2	0	0
n/a	5	4	3	12	9	12
IDK	1	1	0	0	1	2
NR	1	0	0	0	0	0

(*Continued*) If YES: Do you think these services are better-quality than services provided by the government?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes:						
More accessible	1	0	3	1	0	0
Better quality	2	0	1	3	6	2
[nothing added]	0	0	0	0	0	0

TSE: Equal	0	0	4	0	0	1
No:						
Govt better	2	3	1	1	0	0
Not selected	0	0	4	0	0	0
n/a	8	4	2	13	9	11
IDK	5	11	3	0	3	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	3	0	4	4	6	2
To some extent	0	0	4	0	0	1
No	2	3	5	1	0	0
n/a (no services)	8	4	2	13	9	11
IDK	5	11	3	0	3	4

Section 6 – Connections in the Community

What is the role of the traditional Kingdoms?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Preserve culture	3	3	4	7	1	1
Unite people	5	2	3	9	1	0
Dispute resolution	1	2	6	5	0	0
Another	0	2	6	2	1	0
Has no importance	0	0	0	0	0	1
n/a / No kingdom	0	0	0	0	6	7
IDK	11	10	0	0	9	9

Do you think the traditional Kingdoms are important?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

Yes:						
Preserve culture	4	3	4	8	0	0
Solve disputes	1	0	6	5	0	0
Promote unity	1	2	4	5	1	0
Another	2	3	2	2	1	1
[nothing added]	0	0	0	0	0	1
TSE	0	0	2	2	1	0
No:						
No role/effect	5	1	0	0	2	5
Seek power	0	0	0	0	1	0
Dangerous	0	0	0	0	1	0
[nothing added]	0	0	0	0	0	1
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	1
IDWTA	1	0	0	0	0	0
IDK	4	9	0	0	11	9
NR	0	1	0	0	0	0

When you are working at your job, do you prefer to work with people who are from the same ethnic group as you?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Easier communication	5*	5	1	2	7	6
Yes – We share culture	1	6	0	0	5	0
Sometimes	3	1	1	2	1	0
No - Performance important	4	0	9	7	0	1

No - Tribes are equal	2	2	5	5	0	2
No - Want to work w others	3	4	2	2	0	5
No - nothing added	0	0	0	0	5	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	6	11	1	2	12	6
Sometimes	3	1	1	2	1	0
No	9	6	18	14	5	12

**Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18*

The responses that were given in answer to this question varied from one location to the next, with villages even within the same district yielding different responses. In Villages 2 and 5, in Pallisa and in Ntungamo districts respectively, respondents indicate that they prefer to work with others who are from the same ethnic tribe as themselves, because communication is easier and because they share the same culture. However, in the remaining villages, respondents suggested that they not necessarily prefer to work with members of their same tribe, because: tribes are equal; they like to have the experience of working with others; and in particular because they feel that a person's work performance is more important than their tribal identity.

In your opinion, are some ethnic groups in Uganda more likely to benefit from economic opportunities than others?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Some tribes favoured	6	8	6	9	6	0
Yes - More educated	5	2	1	2	0	0
Yes - Corruption	1	1	0	1	0	0

Yes - Work/led better	1	7	4	2	2	1
Yes - nothing added	1	0	2	1	5	1
To some extent	0	0	0	0	0	4
No - All are equal	0	0	2	1	1	2
No - Depends on leadership	0	0	1	0	0	0
No - Depends on effort	0	0	2	3	0	3
No - nothing added	0	0	0	0	0	4
IDK	4	1	0	0	4	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	14	17	13	15	13	2
To some extent	0	0	0	0	0	4
No	0	0	5	4	1	9
I don't know	4	1	0	0	4	4

In answering this question, respondents tended to point to the greater favour that some tribes are looked upon than others, with one third of respondents nominating this as the reason they feel some tribes are more likely to benefit from economic opportunity for others. In Pallisa (Villages 1 and 2), respondents also expressed the opinion that some tribes are more educated, or better led, than others, and that this contributes to their economic advantages. Only in Village 6 (Ntungamo) did respondents disagree

that some tribes are advantaged over others, arguing that all tribes are equal, or that those who benefit from economic opportunities do so because of their greater effort, rather than because of their tribe. The greater level of economic opportunity of people from south-western Uganda (including Ntungamo) represents an important context to this question, as those from Village 6 may be less inclined to acknowledge any role for tribal favouritism as contributing to their region's greater levels of economic success.

In your opinion, are some ethnic groups in Uganda more likely to be hold important political roles than other groups?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Some tribes favoured	6	12	10	12	18	4
Yes - More educated	4	1	1	0	0	0
Yes – Better led	2	0	2	0	0	0
Yes - [nothing added]	5	2	2	2	6	1
To some extent	0	0	0	0	1	5
No - All have an equal chance	0	0	3	3	1	5
No - Better educated	0	0	1	1	0	0
No - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	0	1
IDK	2	3	0	0	2	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

Yes	17*	15	15	14	24	5
To some extent	0	0	0	0	1	5
No	0	0	4	4	1	6
I don't know	2	3	0	0	2	4

**Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18*

Similarly to Question 80, responses to this question were markedly different in Village 6 (in Ntungamo) than in the other five field sites. In Village 6, 5/18 respondents argued that some tribes are not more able to hold political roles than other tribes, because all tribes have an equal chance to lead. 5/18 argued that it is accurate to some extent, though not fully, to argue that some tribes have more access to political roles than others. A further 4 argued that some tribes are favoured, while 4 responded 'I don't know'. The comparatively greater level of political power of people from south-western Uganda, including Ntungamo, may perhaps contribute to a reluctance amongst some respondents to acknowledge any possible role for favouritism in the levels of political access and power of their tribes over others.

In contrast, respondents in Villages 1-5 argued that it is the case that some tribes are more able to access important political roles than other tribes, with the most common comment being that some tribes are favoured for these roles over others. Four respondents in Village 1 also suggested that some tribes have had better access to education, and so are better able to access political roles for this reason.

On balance, responses to this question suggest that survey participants perceive that some tribes have greater levels of access to political opportunities and roles than others, and that this access is based on tribal identity, rather than on other criteria. This result corresponds with literature that suggests than in the Museveni era, political leadership roles have disproportionately accrued to members of tribes from south-western Uganda.

Are there any processes for resolving disputes or conflicts in the village? For example, a dispute over land ownership?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	18	18	18	18	15	14
TSE	0	0	0	0	0	0
No	0	0	0	0	1	3
IDK	0	0	0	0	2	1

(*Continued*) If YES: Who is the person who makes the decisions in these cases?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
LC1 chair/council	9	3	14	14	15	12
LC2 chair/council	0	0	0	1	1	0
LC3 chair/council	0	4	4	1	1	1
LC5 chair/council	1	0	0	0	1	1
Clan/tribal leaders	10	12	13	14	3	3
Police	0	0	1	6	2	5
Land Board	0	3	0	0	0	0
Other	2	1	6	4	1	2
n/a	0	0	0	0	3	4

Where do you find out information about what services are available to you?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Newspapers	0	1	2	3	5	3
Radio	15	18	15	13	17	16
TV	0	0	0	0	4	2
Noticeboards	2	1	1	0	1	2
Internet	0	0	0	2	0	0
Govt office	7	6	0	0	1	0
Another person	0	9	15	17	12	12

Other	2	1	4	0	2	0

Where do you find out information about political issues?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Newspapers	0	0	1	3	5	3
Radio	15	16	14	10	17	15
TV	0	0	0	0	3	1
Noticeboards	1	0	0	0	3	2
Internet	0	0	0	1	0	0
Govt office	9	4	0	0	1	0
Another person	10	9	13	15	12	11
Other	0	0	2	0	2	0

Responses to Q84 and Q85 point to the importance of radio communications for conveying information regarding available public services, and information about political issues, with a large proportion of respondents nominating this is a principal information source. Furthermore, a majority of respondents reported that they obtain information about services and political issues from another person. Respondents in Village 1 (Pallisa) reported that they do not seek information about services that are available from another person.

In Pallisa District, respondents in Village 1 and Village 2 report that they seek information about political issues and available services from the local government office, which was not reported by respondents in other areas. This suggests a greater level of familiarity with local government as a source of information in this area than in other regions.

It is noteworthy that the main information sources for most respondents – radio, and another person – are each sources that do not require any level of literacy to be accessed. In the context of rural areas where education access is not high, this may be an important factor in determining which information sources are chosen.

However, these are also communication channels that can easily be influenced by government leaders if they should choose to do so, such as through campaigns regarding NRM-affiliated election candidates.

Section 7 – Forming New Districts

In your opinion, do you think there is the right number of districts in Uganda?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	2	8	7	4	6	5
No – too many	10	6	6	5	6	8
No – not enough	3	1	4	4	5	1
IDK	3	3	1	5	1	4

Responses to this question varied across locations, with a majority of respondents suggesting that they felt Uganda has either the right number of districts now (30 per cent of respondents), or too many (40 per cent). These responses were offered consistently across the studied districts.

The goal of this question was not to seek a 'correct' response from participants about the number of districts in Uganda, given the complexities of district proliferation as a public policy issue. Instead, this question sought to understand respondents' perceptions of whether the phenomenon of creating additional districts should continue, or whether the rapid creation of new districts had resulted in there being too many districts at present – in the perception of the respondent.

When asked to explain the rationale for their response, verbal responses suggested that some respondents perceive that too many districts are too poorly resourced to be effective, rather than their overall number being too high. That is, respondents were not concerned that the raw number of districts was sufficient or too high, but that the districts that have been created more recently are too poorly-resourced to be effective. These responses were expressed consistently across all districts, including in Pallisa, where an additional district has subsequently been created.

Would you be happy if another district was created in this area?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Current district is far	2	2	2	0	0	1
Yes - Brings services/devt	5	7	6	8	3	5
Yes - Creates jobs	4	4	4	5	2	2
Yes - Other areas have one	0	1	0	1	0	0
Yes - Population growing	0	0	1	2	0	0
Yes - Better market access	0	0	1	0	0	0
Yes - Distributes resources	0	0	1	1	0	0
Yes - No longer oppressed	0	1	0	0	0	0
Yes - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	2
TSE: Depends on population	1	0	4	1	1	1
No - Districts are expensive	1	2	0	0	1	0
No - Services not improve	1	1	0	1	1	1
No - Not too large now	0	0	0	0	5	5
No - I do not benefit	2	0	1	1	0	0

No - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	4	1
IDK	3	0	0	1	1	0

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	11	15	15	17	6	10
To some extent	1	0	2	0	1	1
No	4	3	1	1	11	7
I don't know	2	0	0	0	0	0

Responses to this question were reasonably consistent across the studied sites, with the exception of Village 5 (in Ntungamo District). For Villages 1-4 and 6, respondents tended to suggest that they would be happy if a new district were established in their area. Explanatory comments focused on respondents' belief that the creation of additional districts brings with it improved services and development, and improved access to jobs. Notably, in the free comments, many villagers expressed the view that the creation of a new district brings development itself nearer to the village.

The responses to this question suggest that in the studied sites, villagers do not perceive current levels of service delivery and employment opportunities to be sufficient, and perceive that they would be improved by the creation of a new, smaller, nearer district. This outcome implies that decentralisation has not yet succeeded in bringing improved services and development to the studied sites, according to the survey participants, and this situation would be improved through the intensification of decentralisation: the creation of additional districts.

In Village 5, respondents commented that they did not feel their district is too large at the moment, despite Ntungamo in fact being one of Uganda's largest districts (partly due to the rapid proliferation of districts in other areas). This potentially relates to the higher levels of economic activity and service delivery that tend to be present in south-western Uganda, where Village 5 is located, meaning that there is less demand for the services and development that new districts are perceived to bring.

When a new district is created, who benefits from it?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Villagers	0	3	9	8	9	8
Farmers	2	2	8	8	6	3
Poor people	0	1	5	4	6	3
Politicians	11	15	10	9	15	14
Technical officials	7	9	3	6	5	3
Children	1	2	2	1	2	3
Powerful people	13	10	7	8	6	6
Everyone	3	1	5	5	4	3
No one	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	4	7	4	4	4	2
IDK	0	0	0	1	0	0

(Continued) Of these options, who benefits the most?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Villagers	0	1	1	2	3	2
Farmers	0	0	0	1	0	0
Poor people	0	0	0	0	0	0
Politicians	4	15	10	4	9	13
Technical officials	6	1	1	1	1	0
Children	0	0	1	0	0	0
Powerful people	6	6	1	1	2	1
Everyone	1	0	2	3	2	0
No one	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other	2	3	2	5	0	1
IDK	0	0	0	3	0	0
Error	0	0	0	0	2	0

Responses to questions 88 and 89 reflect respondents' belief that the majority of the benefit of a new district accrues to those in power: to politicians, powerful people, and to a lesser extent, technical officials.

When a new district is created, who is made worse off from it?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Villagers	6	13	5	5	6	5
Farmers	10	7	7	5	2	0
Poor people	12	10	8	5	4	5
Politicians	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technical officials	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children	4	1	0	4	0	0
Powerful people	0	0	0	0	0	0
Everyone	0	0	0	0	2	0
No one	1	1	4	5	4	7
Other	0	2	3	3	2	2
IDK	3	0	2	4	3	2
NR	0	0	1	0	0	1

(Continued) Of these options, who loses the most?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Villagers	4	10	1	2	3	5
Farmers	2	1	1	3	0	0
Poor people	8	7	8	1	5	3
Politicians	0	0	1	1	0	0
Technical officials	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children	0	0	0	1	0	0
Powerful people	0	0	0	0	0	0

Everyone	0	0	0	0	0	0
No one	1	1	4	5	4	7
Other	0	2	2	2	2	1
IDK	3	0	0	4	4	1

Do you think the creation of more districts makes service delivery better?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Services nearer/better	4	10	10	10	8	8
Yes - Creates jobs	1	1	2	3	0	1
Yes - Government nearer	2	1	0	0	0	1
Yes - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	5	6
TSE - Services may improve	1	0	5	1	0	1
No - Dists perform poorly	2	1	1	2	2	1
No - Services not improve	2	0	0	2	1	0
No - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	1	0
IDK	4	6	0	1	1	2

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	8	12	12	13	13	16
To some extent	1	0	5	1	0	1
No	5	1	1	4	4	1

I don't know	4	6	0	1	1	2

In response to this question, survey participants reported that in general, and across each studied site, they are of the opinion that the creation of a new district makes service delivery better. For a majority of respondents, the creation of an additional district improves service delivery by bringing services nearer to the village, or improving the quality of services. In Villages 1 and 2 (Pallisa District) some respondents expressed more uncertainty about whether the creation of a new district generates improved service delivery, with 10/36 respondents answering "I don't know". In Village 3, in Lira District, 5/18 respondents were not confident that services would definitely improve following the creation of an additional district, with 5/18 respondents answering "To some extent; services may improve". 16/108 respondents (15 per cent) were of the opinion that the creation of an additional district would not improve service delivery, with several respondents highlighting the poor performance of districts as being a cause of poor services, rather than the number or size of districts.

Do you think the creation of more districts makes it easier for you to communicate with the government?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Access/comms easier	7	10	7	7	8	5
Yes - Leaders will be locals	0	0	3	4	0	0
Yes - Population smaller	1	0	3	1	0	0
Yes - Monitoring easier	0	0	1	0	0	0

Yes - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	5	6
TSE – Effort/capacity	2	0	2	2	0	0
TSE - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	0
No - Leaders never communicate	0	1	3	3	2	2
No - [nothing added]	1	0	0	0	0	0
IDK	6	7	1	1	2	5

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	9	10	14*	12	13	11
To some extent	2	0	2	2	1	0
No	1	1	4	3	2	2
I don't know	6	7	1	1	2	5

**Respondents were able to respond with more than one reason for their answer; total responses may tally to greater than 18*

For the majority of respondents, across each of the studied sites, the creation of additional districts is thought to make communication with government officials easier, with respondents answering that accessing and communicating with officials is easier with the creation of new districts. In Villages 3 and 4 (Lira District), respondents also reported that the creation of an additional district means that leaders are more likely to be members of the local community, making communication easier. However, in Villages 1 and 2 (Pallisa), 13/36 respondents (36 per cent) were unsure whether the creation of a new district makes communicating with leaders easier, answering 'I don't know' in response to this question.

Do you feel that you are involved in the process of making the annual budget?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes - Leaders listen	1	0	1	1	2	2
Yes - I pay taxes	0	1	1	0	0	0
Yes - Budget is read out	0	0	2	0	0	0
Yes - [nothing added]	0	0	0	0	1	0
TSE	0	1	2	1	1	0
No - No meeting occurs	5	4	0	0	0	0
No - Not asked/consulted	10	7	9	3	8	4
No - Budget is read only	0	0	3	11	1	1
No - [nothing added]	0	1	0	0	4	7
IDK	2	4	0	2	1	4

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
Yes	1	1	4	1	3	2
To some extent	0	1	2	1	1	0
No	15	12	12	14	13	12
I don't know	2	4	0	2	1	4

Across each of the studied field sites, respondents report that they do not feel that they are involved in the process of formulating the national budget, even though this is one of the stated goals of the bottom-up planning process.

Have you heard of the annual budget being called 'consultative'?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6

Yes	1	0	3	1	9	7
No	16	14	14	17	9	11
No response	1	4	1	0	0	0

(*Continued*) If YES – What do you think this word means?

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
To be asked their views	2	0	2	1	8	4
[Anything else]	1	0	3	0	2	8
n/a	0	0	0	9	0	0
I don't know	8	11	0	0	1	0
No response	7	7	13	8	7	6

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